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CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

ARCHIVISTS

LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

ASSISTANT ARCHIVIST—LANCASHIRE RECORD OFFICE (Grade A P.5, £5,220 to £5,547 per annum)

This POST is third in seniority at the Record Office. A good honours degree and post-graduate diploma in archive administration, or equivalent, required. Interest in ecclesiastical records and possession of a current driving licence an advantage.

Applications from the Chief Executive Clerk (Reference 41/PAT), County Hall, Preston, PR1 8XJ (Preston 54868, Extension 5600) to be returned by Thursday, 31st January, 1980.

ROYAL BOROUGH OF KINGSTON UPON THAMES

LIBRARIES AND MUSEUM DEPARTMENT

ASSISTANT ARCHIVIST £4,170 to £5,157 p.a. inclusive

As the sole professional archivist employed by the Royal Borough, he or she will work within the Directorate of Education and Recreation, but under the professional supervision of the Surrey County Archivist, who is Honorary Borough Archivist.

Duties include the central custodial function of the Borough Historical Records, the preservation of modern records of the Borough administration, giving advice to officers, and talks and dealing with archival publications. A proportion of the time is devoted to County Archives matters, which gives a broader range of professional experience than is normal in a Borough post of this kind.

Applicants should possess a good Honours Degree and a University post-graduate diploma in archive administration or other appropriate qualification.

Informal enquiries—Dr D. B. Robinson, Surrey County Archivist (01-546 1050, Ext. 3561).

Application forms and job description from the Borough Librarian and Curator, Administrative Headquarters, Central Library, Fairfield Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey, KT1 2PS (01-546 0026 during normal office hours). Closing date: January 25, 1980.

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Application form and full job specification from the Personnel Officer, National Council of Social Service, 26 Bedford Square, London, WC1B 3HU. Tel. 01-636 4066. Closing date: 25 January, 1980.

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Bretton, Peterborough
Principal, Mr. M. R. C. Jones B.Sc.
Established Group 12

Required for Easter, 1980:
SCHOOL LIBRARIAN—BRETTON WOODS (A.P. 5)

A unique opportunity exists for an enthusiastic and energetic CHARTERED LIBRARIAN, preferably with a teaching qualification. Experience of resource-based learning, implementing user-education and involvement with curriculum development would be desirable.

The person appointed will be based at Bretton Woods, which is a rapidly expanding community school situated in the new township of Bretton. The school (eventually 1,500-plus pupils) runs a varied and extensive community programme. Bretton District Library, close to the school campus, is also the library of Bretton Woods and the successful applicant will join a team of chartered librarians who are involved in the sharing of Resources Policy within the library and the school.

There is a possibility of assistance being given with housing in appropriate cases.

Further details and application forms are obtainable from the Principal at the above address (S.A.E. first class, telephone (0733) 266600), to whom they should be returned by 25th January, 1980.

HEREFORD AND WORCESTER COUNTY COUNCIL

WORCESTER TECHNICAL COLLEGE

ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

Required February 1, 1980

Experienced qualified LIBRARIAN to be responsible for day to day operations and deputise for the Tutor Librarian.

Salary—N.J.C. A.P. 3 (£3,080 to £3,533).

Further details and application forms from Chief Administrative Officer, Worcester Technical College, Deansway, Worcester. Telephone 28383.

LIBRARIANS

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARINGEY

LIBRARIAN IN CHARGE
Grade SO.1

APPLICATIONS are invited from suitably qualified persons with a wide experience of professional duties at the appropriate level.

The duties of the post are in the Wolfare Group of the department and the successful candidate will be responsible for the running of the Mobile Library Service, deliveries to housebound readers and homes including in the Borough, also a library service to the Prince of Wales Hospital. The post offers scope for a considerable degree of personal attention to readers.

Salary, £6,111 to £6,400 including London Weighting.

Application forms from: Controller of Libraries, Museum and Arts Department, Central Library, High Road, London N22 6XD. Returnable within 11 days of this advertisement.

MEDICAL LIBRARIANS FOR NORTH-EAST/ NORTH-WEST THAMES REGIONS

APPLICATIONS are invited for the above appointments, both to commence if possible at 1 April, 1980. The Regional Librarians will be responsible, under the direction of the respective University Regional Postgraduate Medical Deans for those Regions, for advice on development and maintenance of full library services to NHS staff throughout their Region. This will include co-ordination of the work of librarians and co-operative librarians of existing libraries in postgraduate medical centres, maintaining links with other libraries and with relevant national and international library organizations; the in-service training of library staff and the guidance of library users. Actual working base in each case may be determined according to the circumstances of the appointee.

The salary will be on either University Scale IIB or III according to experience (plus £470 p.a. London Allowance if the appointment is based in a relevant area). Car driving essential.

Applications from appropriately qualified librarians (5 copies together with the names and addresses of at least 2 referees) should be addressed to The Secretary of the Federation, British Postgraduate Medical Federation, 33 Millman Street, London WC1N 3EJ, from whom further particulars may be obtained. Closing date for applications: Friday 25 January, 1980.

IMPERIAL COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

(UNIVERSITY OF LONDON)
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ASSISTANT required for general duties in GEOLOGY DEPARTMENTAL LIBRARY. Education to "A" level, reliability and enthusiasm essential. Previous experience in a university library and/or of geology an advantage. Not suitable for pre-library school applicant.

Salary on scale £3,018-£4,151 inclusive. For further details, apply to Librarian, Geology Department, Imperial College, Prince Consort Road, London SW7 2BP.

LIBRARIAN/INFORMATION OFFICER

APPLICATIONS are invited from CHARTERED LIBRARIANS preferably with experience of U.D.C. to run a small library/information service for a medium-sized firm of Chartered Accountants situated in the West End of London. Hours: 9.15 a.m. to 5.15 p.m. Monday to Friday. Salary negotiable.

Applications in writing to: Mr. A. R. W. Beattie, Brebner, Allen & Trapp, 180 Baker Street, London W1M 2HF.

Closing date within 14 days of the appearance of this advertisement.

LONDON BOROUGH OF BARKING AND DAGENHAM

BOROUGH LIBRARIES DEPARTMENT
LIBRARY ASSISTANT (TRAINEE POST)

APPLICATIONS are invited from suitably qualified LIBRARIANS for this POST in the Borough's Library Service. Salary: AP1 £3,477 to £3,873 per annum inclusive.

Forms of application may be obtained from the Borough Librarian, Central Library, Barking, Essex, IG11 7NB.

Closing date: 28th January, 1980.

LONDON BOROUGH OF EALING

EDUCATION SERVICE

EALING COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

Salary: (AP3 Scale) £4,470 to £4,[illegible] per annum inclusive.

Duties include cataloguing and classification, inter-library loans and readers' advisory work. Applicants should be qualified librarians, and a degree would be an additional recommendation.

N.J.C. conditions of service. Thirty-five hour week.

Application forms and further details available from the Chief Administrative Officer (TO/AP), Ealing College of Higher Education, St. Mary's Road, Ealing, London W5 5RF. Telephone Number 579 4111, Extension 230. To be returned within 10 days of the appearance of this advertisement.

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

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UBS Senior Library Staff Grade III, £8,058-£10,773.

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The Technical Services Librarian is one of a team of three Sub-Librarians who assist the Librarian in administering the Library services and who deputise for him in his absence.

Candidates should have a good honours degree, a professional qualification in Librarianship and at least ten years library experience.

The appointment will be made within the above salary scale according to qualifications and experience.

Further particulars are available from The Recruitment Office (TGGO/31), The Open University, P.O. Box 75, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AL, or telephone Milton Keynes 653404: there is a 24-hour answering service on 653868.

Closing date for applications 26th January, 1980.

PERTH AND KINROSS DISTRICT COUNCIL

DISTRICT LIBRARIAN

Will all intending applicants for the above POST please contact the Hon. Secretary, The Society of Metropolitan and County Chief Librarians, Woodlands, Long Lane, Harden, Bingley, W. Yorkshire, BD16 1HY.

THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

APPLICATIONS are invited for a POST of ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN in the University Library.

Candidates should be graduates, with professional library qualifications. The post is in the Technical Processes division; and candidates should have a sound knowledge of cataloguing and an interest in data processing.

Salary on the 1A scale for Senior Library Staff £4,333-£7,521.

Application forms and further particulars may be obtained from the Registrar, The University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT, quoting reference number 116/16/AG. Closing date for applications, 5th February, 1980.

WELLCOME INSTITUTE FOR THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE

APPLICATIONS are invited for the POST of LIBRARY ASSISTANT. The position is suitable for non-graduates with at least Part I of the Library Association Professional Examination, or for graduates seeking pre-qualification experience. A knowledge of one or more foreign languages would be an advantage.

Salary not less than £3,700. Contributory pension scheme and canteen facilities.

Forward applications, with full details of education and experience and two referees to the Secretary, Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 183 Euston Road, London NW1 2BP, by 11th February 1980.

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Telephone: 01-837 1234 Extension 437

University of Leiden

Chair of English Literature

Vacancy number 9-549/2597

Applicants are invited for the Chair of English Literature tenable in the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Leiden. The post will be available from 1 November, 1980. Minimum salary Hfl. 81.576,00 per annum.

The person appointed will be required to contribute to and to stimulate teaching and research in English literature of the period from 1500 to the present day. Applicants should have a Ph.D. or equivalent, and have research interests and extensive publications within the period stated. Specialisation in the renaissance and/or the seventeenth century will be considered an advantage, but candidates whose main interest lies in the more modern period, will also be considered.

The post carries with it administrative duties, and an appointee who does not know Dutch will be expected to learn it within a short time. Further information about the appointment may be obtained from professor N. E. Osselton, Chairman of the English Department, Schuttersveld 9, 2316 XG Leiden, The Netherlands, tel. 071-148333, extn. 6506.

Applications, together with curriculum vitae, a list of publications and the names of three referees, should be submitted before 1 February, 1980 (with an indication, on both letter and envelope, of the corresponding vacancy number) to: Dean Faculty of Letters, Rapenburg 73, 2311 GJ Leiden, The Netherlands.

Edmonton Public Library

HEAD OF TECHNICAL SERVICES

Reporting to the Director, the Head of Technical Services is a member of the senior management team. Directs the programmes and activities of library support services and coordinates automation projects. Edmonton Public Library has a collection of approximately 774,000 volumes and serves a population of 491,3[illegible] through a Central Library and ten branches with an annual budget of $8 million.

RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE: acquisition of library materials; automated cataloguing and COM catalogue; processing and maintaining library materials and [illegible] automated circulation system. In addition, the successful candidate will participate in budget planning.

QUALIFICATIONS: Minimum academic requirement is a general degree plus a BLS or MLS or FLA or equivalent from an accredited library school. Eight years broad library experience is essential, with emphasis on library technical services and automated library systems. Applicant must possess demonstrated administrative ability.

SALARY RANGE: Under revision. In the $30,000/£11,5[illegible] range.

Apply to: Employment Officer
Edmonton Public Library
7 Sir Winston Churchill Square
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

CLWYD COUNTY COUNCIL

Clwyd Library Service

Health District Librarian

Salary on scale AP5/SO1 £5,226-£6,090 p.a. Applications for the above post are invited from Chartered Librarians with not less than three to four years' experience in a medical, special, and/or Public Library with particular emphasis upon reference and information work.

The successful applicant will be required to provide a library service to the medical, nursing and other professional staff of the Clwyd North Health District.

The Librarian will be based at the newly commissioned Glan Clwyd District General Hospital, Bodelwyddan, which includes a multi-disciplinary teaching unit.

The post carries an essential car user allowance.

Application form and job description obtainable from the Director of Administration and Legal Services, Shire Hall, Mold, Clwyd. (Tel. Mold 2121 Ext. 394) to be returned by 18th February, 1980.

E. R. LL. DAVIES
Director of Administration and Legal Services

T·L·S

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

FRIDAY • 18 JANUARY 1980 • No 4008 • 30p

UNIVERSITY OF JORDAN LIBRARY

Bernard Berenson—from Vilna to I Tatti

Stuart Hampshire on G. E. Moore

CATCHING UP

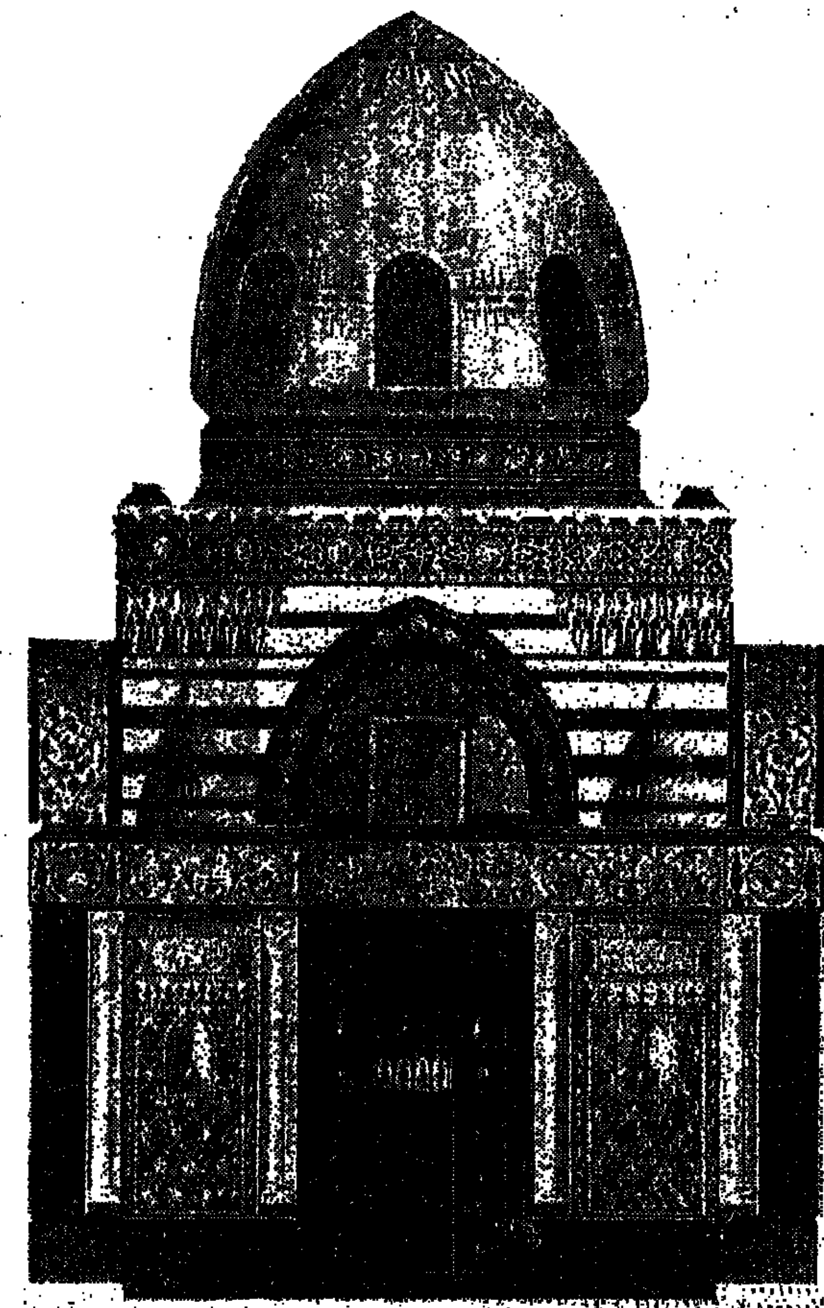
Poetry–British, American, and in translation

The spread of kidnapping; The arms trade

Stanley Elkin's new novel

Marcel Duchamp stripped bare

A. J. P. Taylor on George F. Kennan



The Arab Hall (1879) of Leighton House—the home of Frederic, Lord Leighton, in Holland Park Road, Kensington—for which the architect was George Aitchison: see Commentary, page 60.

Commentary: 'Hollywood' on TV; George Aitchison; Moholy-Nagy; An O'Neill quartet

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THE TIMES

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

18 JANUARY 1980

contents

ANITA BROOKNER	Meryle Secrest: Being Bernard Berenson
	Ernest Samuels: Bernard Berenson—The Making of a Connoisseur
PAUL JOHNSON	Caroline Moorehead: Fortune's Hostages
STELLA MARY NEWTON	Agnes Geijer: A History of Textile Art
STUART HAMPSHIRE	Paul Levy: Moore—G. E. Moore and the Cambridge Apostles
HENRY GIFFORD	Edward Acton: Alexander Herzen and the Role of the Intellectual Revolutionary
	Fiction
PAUL BAILEY	Stanley Elkin: The Living End
VICTORIA GLENDINNING	Stevie Smith: Over the Frontier
GALEN STRAWSON	Helen Garner: Monkey Grip
LINDSAY DUGUID	J. I. M. Stewart: Our England is a Garden
A. J. P. TAYLOR	George F. Kennan: The Decline of Bismarck's European Order
C. H. SISSON	The Goldfish (poem)
JONATHAN SUMPTION	Hugh Thomas: An Unfinished History of the World
ROBERT BOYERS	Octavio Paz: Marcel Duchamp—Appearance Stripped Bare
	Commentary
HELEN SMITH	George Aitchison at the Heinz Gallery
CELINA FOX	Moholy-Nagy at the ICA
S. S. PRAWER	"Hollywood" (Thames Television)
STEPHEN FENDER	Eugene O'Neill at the Cottesloe Theatre
DAVID WILSON	Kevin Brownlow: The War, the West and the Wilderness
	Michael Pye and Linda Myles: The Movie Brats
	Morris Beja: Film & Literature
	Steven Philip Kramer and James Michael Welsh: Abel Gance
	Jeanine Basinger: Anthony Mann
TOBY FITTON	Pamela Street: Arthur Bryant—Portrait of a Historian
	To the Editor
	Author, Author
	Among this week's contributors
	Catching Up: Poetry
EDNA LONGLEY	1: The British
JOHN FULLER	2: The Americans
D. M. THOMAS	3: Poetry in translation
ANDREW MOTION	Human Geography (poem)
GEOFFREY MARSHALL	G. H. L. Le May: The Victorian Constitution
JANET MORGAN	Lord Home: Border Reflections
	Jo Grimond: Memoirs
	Harold Wilson: Final Term
G. S. ROUSSEAU	M. R. Brownell: Alexander Pope and the Arts of Georgian England
	Literature in brief
J. I. M. STEWART	John Worthen: D. H. Lawrence and the Idea of the Novel
	V. S. Pritchett: The Myth Makers
JOHN BATCHELOR	Jane Chance Nitzsche: Tolkien's Art—A Mythology for England
PETER KEATING	James Gibson (Editor): Thomas Hardy—The Complete Poems, Variorum Edition
	Richard H. Taylor: The Personal Notebooks of Thomas Hardy
ERIC HOMBERGER	Edgell Rickword: Literature in Society—Essays & Opinions II 1931-1978

Fifty years on . . .

In the TLS of January 16, 1930, Cyril Falls reviewed Her Privates We by "Private 19022" (Frederic Manning):

The private soldier has never been vocal, and thus we have not many pictures of warfare from his point of view. Even in the case of Rifleman Harris the splendid story comes to us from a highly educated man and skilful writer, to whom the old warrior related it as he sat at his shoemaker's bench. So in that of "Her Privates We", probably the best and honestest description of life in the ranks during the Great War that has yet appeared in English, the narrator has chosen for his principal personage—and obviously to represent himself—a man of antecedents, education and sentiments very different from those of his fellows and even of his closest friends. Private Bourne does not speak in the first person, but the War is seen through his eyes.

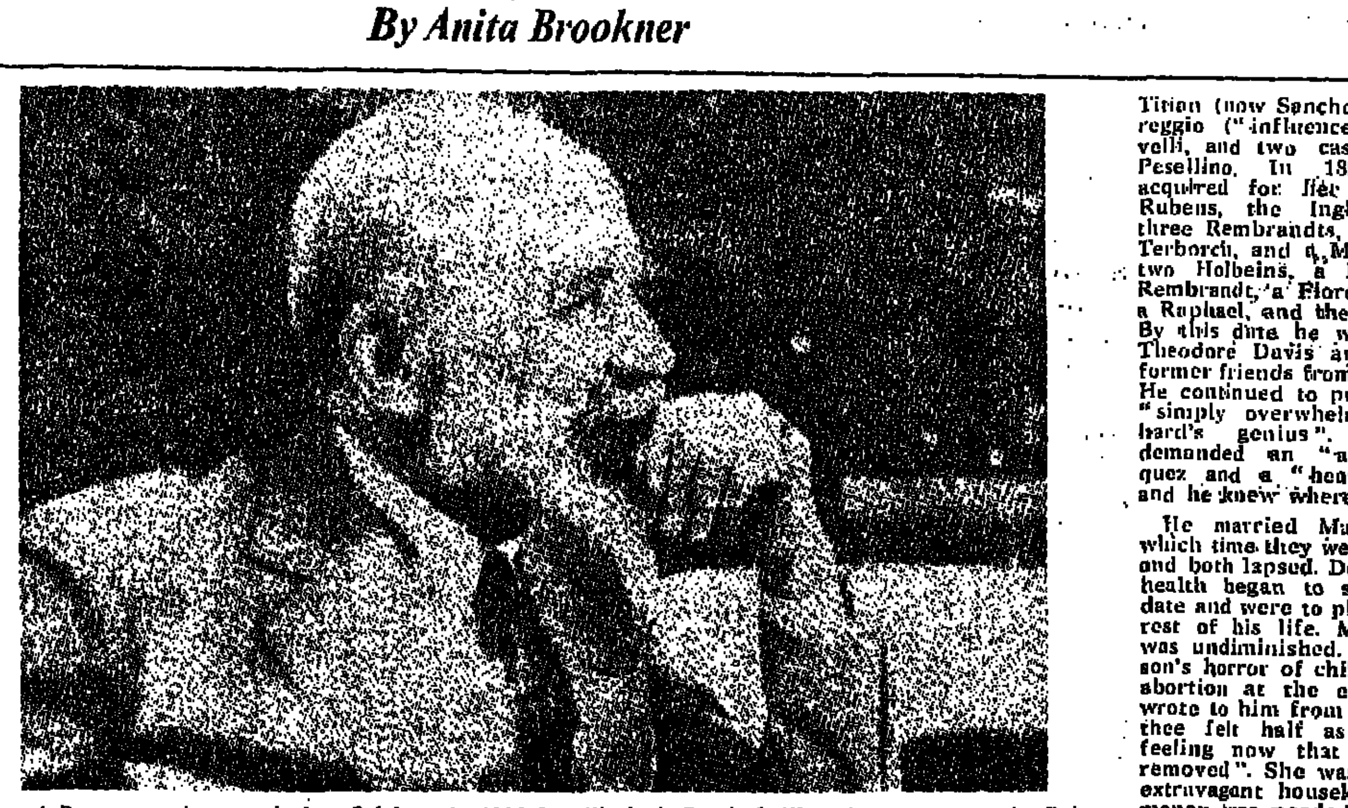
"Private 19022" is a very able writer, but he lacks that power—which, indeed, few seem to have possessed since the days of the great Victorian novelists—of crowding a stage with characters and giving every one of them, even the merest super, a distinct and easily recognizable personality. Some of his supers are superb...

But Bourne's friends, Shem, Martlow, "Weeper" Smart, the Regimental Sergeant-Major—what an original, happy and convincing portrait is this, Sergeant-Major Tozer!—are all clear-cut. Bourne himself is really masterly. He is a man who in days of peace would never have found anything in common with the bucolic Shem or the *gamin* Martlow. He is a cool, intelligent soldier, who would make an excellent platoon commander, but he dislikes the notion of taking a commission. The long period of association with the others has given him something of their outlook, and he feels that he will never acquire that of the officer. And yet between him and them there is a gulf, bridged by good fellowship on both sides, but never filled in. Even with Shem and Martlow, the other two of a trio of inseparables, the link is, as he explains to the Chaplain, comradeship rather than friendship. "It is different: it has its own loyalties and affections; and I am not so sure that it does not rise on occasion to an intensity of feeling which friendship never touches. It may be less in itself, I don't know, but its opportunity is greater." Here, then, we see the private soldier as Bourne, his mate, his comrade and half, but only half his kin, sees him... For all their foul language, their gambling, their criticism of authority, their cynicism, Bourne and his friends are determined to win the War, though the only hope any of them has of seeing the end is by the aid of a wound. They have none of the optimism of certain of their superiors. "Oh, we'll win all right, sir", says one of them to his officer, "but not yet." And it is almost every one of them who, avoiding the comfortable "blighty", avoided that "not yet" meant "not in my time".

If the atmosphere is realistic, the mode of life appears equally so. Those of us who served only as officers can say no more than "appears" of certain aspects, though of others, we can declare that they are definitely true. The old Army tradition remained unchanged by the War: officers were expected to know as much of their men's lives as would conduce to their comfort and happiness and the discipline of the unit, but not to search for more. The smuggled bottle of whisky, the quiet gamble, the knuckle-fight in a cowshed, one shut one's eyes to them if one could; and the sensible commanding officer looked without favour on the Paul Pry who brought them to light, even while he faithfully dealt out punishment. But so much is the very essence of War-time existence that one can take the writer on trust for the rest...

The master of the attributions

By Anita Brookner



Bernard Berenson, photographed at Salzburg in 1936 by Elizabeth Percival. The picture appears in Being Bernard Berenson, *by Meryle Secrest, reviewed on this page.*

MERYLE SECREST:
Being Bernard Berenson
A Biography
473pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £8.50.
0 297 77564 2

ERNEST SAMUELS:
Bernard Berenson
The Making of a Connoisseur
477pp. Harvard University Press. £9.50.
0 674 06775 4

Beyond the Pale of Settlement, that thousand-mile strip of territory that once stretched through Imperial Russia and its provinces from the Baltic to the Black Sea, there lies the world, a world as much symbolic as geographical, where the possibilities of advancement are infinite, even if they denature the traveller who desires to exchange one custom for another. For such a traveller there can be no return. The small amount of residual nostalgia he may feel he will willingly renounce for what other people, other citizens, possess as of right: freedom to travel and to prosper, freedom to impose. What he will lose forever is the sense of belonging in a context in which his true reality and significance are understood. Speaking many languages, he will forego his native tongue. Such a traveller was Bernhard (later Bernard) Berenson, doyen of the world's most mandarin profession, grand seigneur, doge of the unattributed fifteenth-century predella panel, passionate sightseer, and permanent exile.

He was born in 1865 in the province of Vilna in Lithuania, in a village so obscure that there seems to be no agreed spelling of its name. At the age of ten he emigrated with his family to America. A photograph taken during his year at Boston University shows a naive but determined face with gleaming eyes, a full mouth, and luxuriant Pre-Raphaelite hair. The date is 1884. Nearly twenty years later, behold the finished man in his Italian villa: correctly tailored, shorn, elegant, the extravagances pared away. He was to become ever more dapper and meticulous, smaller, one would say, until at the end, at the age of ninety-four, he could be carried about in his nurse's arms.

The Jews of Vilna were famous for their learning but that learning was not secular. Knowledge of the Haskalah or Enlightenment movement was limited to a few and these were thought to be not holy. Of the six hundred and thirteen commandments which a pious Jew must fulfil, Berenson was to remember only the tabulation. He made lists, or rather the Lists—of Venetian, Florentine, Umbrian, and Milanese pictures—which have served generations of students as the essential map of Renaissance painting. Like Winckelmann, whom he so much resembles, he left the inimical north for the warm sun of Italy, changing his religion en route, and for the sins he committed under the aegis of Haskalah he was rewarded with the admiration of the world and the veneration of aesthetes and collectors. Like Winckelmann, he lived in great style; unlike Winckelmann he died in his bed, for his enemies—and he had many—were absent at the end. Nobody knows whether he found the heresy by which he lived any easier to sustain than the orthodoxy he abandoned. Neither Berenson himself nor his two excellent biographers have anything to reveal on this point.

Like Winckelmann, Berenson created his own theology, a theology that survived without the help of metaphysics. And like Winckelmann's, his method was an affair of personal vocation based on ethically shaky foundations. His disregard for documents, his taste for the numinous, and his neo-Morellian divinations defined him as a phenomenon, rather like a prestidigitator or a clairvoyant. It is surprising that so much of his activity turned into art history, and opened the eyes of generations of disciples (the word is used advisedly). What is not surprising is that it has worn so badly and has not survived the perfecting of techniques such as the X-raying of successive layers of paint on a panel or a canvas or the refinement of analysis of pigment. The oracular pronouncements with which Berenson could once either promote or banish a work of art no longer hold good; we have entered the era of semantics.

His status as *stupor mundi* was early revealed at Harvard where he followed courses in Greek, Latin, Arabic, Sanskrit, philosophy (under William James) and the art of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance under Charles Eliot Norton, one of whose friends, Isabella Stewart Gardner, was to prove a decisive influence in Berenson's life.

His aspirations at this stage were towards literature and he contributed an extraordinary range of articles to the *Harvard Monthly* and also wrote a few short stories which are the only intimate documents of his whole opaque life. He desired all sorts of excellence, the first step towards which would take him to Oxford and to Europe. Surprisingly, he failed to obtain a travelling scholarship, but private funds were contributed by his friends, teachers, and Mrs Gardner to make up a purse of seven hundred dollars. In 1887 Berenson left America for his Grand Tour. He did indeed go to Oxford, where he failed to make the personal acquaintance of Walter Pater, whose writings he adored. Since it was already Berenson's intention to burn with a hard gem-like flame, this was perhaps regrettable. But there were compensations. In 1888 he met Mary Costelloe, who was to become his wife twelve years later. And then there was the whole continent of Europe: Paris with its theatres, Munich and Bayreuth with their opera, and finally Italy with its pictures.

In the spring of 1889, after months of enchanted wandering, Berenson reached Florence. His desire now was "to encompass the art of Italy" and this he more or less did. The money ran out of course but friends could be persuaded to subsidize him. Only Mrs Gardner appears to have been nettled by the non-return of her protégé. Their correspondence, too rapturous for her taste, was broken off. In the meantime Berenson, a tireless traveller, visited the towns and cities, the villages and hamlets, the churches and obscure convents of the mainland. His prodigious memory filed away details of a painting's appearance, its possible connection with one seen elsewhere, its association with a great network of undiscovered masterpieces languishing far from the appreciative eye. In abandoned chapels Berenson, on a ladder, holding up a candle, would find, examine, and commit to memory. He did not need documents. He seems to have been indifferent to the import of a single work. It was the pilgrimage that obsessed him. In his *Sketch for a Self-Portrait*, written in 1941, he reports a crucial conversation with Enrico Costa in Bergamo in which he decided to devote his life to connoisseurship with "no idea, no ambition, no expectation, no thought of reward. . . . We must not stop until we are sure that every Lotto is a Lotto, every Cariani a Cariani, every Santacroce a Santacroce etc."

And this he did. If his attributions have not always stood the test of time, if those made-up artists Amico di Sandro and Alunno di Domenico have been quietly disbanded, there is no doubt that we now know many more hundreds, even thousands, of Italian pictures than we would have if Berenson had not made his home and his life in Italy. His "method", which to us today may seem almost distastefully magical, was based on the precepts of Morelli, whom he met in Milan in 1901, and the pragmatism of William James whose lectures he had attended at Harvard. Morelli, trained as a doctor in Berlin, perfected the morphological investigation of phenomena and learnt to recognize a painter's signature in the curl of an ear, the angle of a finger, and the fall of a wave of hair. In Berenson's hands, comparative anatomy became connoisseurship; in a very short period of time his faultless memory could connect these noses and fingers and waves of hair across a continent. Artistic personalities grew where none had previously existed; a painter's life could be traced from early to late work. Nor was this accomplished mechanically. Pictures had a curious effect on Berenson which he was only able to explain in clumsy but well-worn terms.

He found them, and by extension other aspects of existence, "life-enhancing". This is not a mere fin-de-siècle flourish. In his occasionally severe phraseology he explains, in *Florentine Painters of the Renaissance*, that "art stimulates to an unwonted activity psychical processes which are in themselves the source of most (if not all) of our pleasures, and which here, free from disturbing sensations, never tend to pass over into pain".

This mysterious process will be triggered off by a realization of a picture's "tactile values", again explored in *Florentine Painters* and again a humdrum description of an important psychological, or, as he would say, "psychical" activity. Just as an infant learns to make of touch the test of reality and only understands what he can grasp, so is it the painter's business to continue this attempt to make sense of the world by "giving tactile values to retinal sensations". For painting is about duplicity; it has only two dimensions. It is the triumph of the painter to create three and his power is thereby disproportionately great. A painter's first business "is to rouse the tactile sense, for I must have the illusion of varying muscular sensations inside my palm and fingers corresponding to the various projections of this figure, before I shall take it for granted as real, *and let it affect me lastingly*" (my italics).

This experience, and others analogous to it, will produce "ideated sensations", another clumsy term which may be nothing more than an up-dated, no-nonsense, and falsely rational equivalent of Stendhal's "illusion parfaite", the process whereby a work of art could activate the experience of perfect happiness glimpsed in other times and places, usually without immediate or apparent causation. For Stendhal, happiness was love or being in love, a brave practice which he carried on fruitlessly all his life. For the equally romantic but much more circumspect Berenson, happiness was a feeling of mystical union with creation or what he called, even more disastrously than usual, "IT-ness". This explains not only his protean gifts, of which he quickly tired, but the eventual transmutation of his love of art into a love of nature, perhaps his most impressive characteristic. "Dahin! Dahin!", he exclaimed with Goethe and in his Italian dream journeyed, almost religiously, on and on, to the next town, the next village, and the next picture.

Unfortunately it all took money and Berenson, still living on his friends, could clearly not be called to account. But in 1892 he managed to secure for his friend James Burke a picture by Piero di Cosimo for two hundred pounds less than the agreed price. Burke made over to him that two hundred pounds. In the spring of 1893 he discouraged a party of Americans in Rome from squandering money on doubtful pictures and received a commission. Any qualms he might have felt at these transactions were quickly dispelled by his, by now constant companion Mary Costelloe who had left her husband and daughters to devote her life to Berenson. A large cheery feminist, Mary was already known in England for her secretaryship of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, her advocacy of women's suffrage and the election of women to County Councils, and her lecture (she adored lecturing) on "The Position of Women in America". Forthright, exuberant, and determined, Mary was undoubtedly life-enhancing. She urged Berenson to publish and typed away at his notes; when his *Venetian Painters of the Renaissance* appeared in 1894 she wrote laudatory critical articles under the name of Mary Logan. The money began to come in.

But it did not really come in until a copy of *Venetian Painters* was sent, as *amende honorable*, to Mrs Gardner who had recently inherited two million dollars and was determined to collect Old Masters, "only the greatest in the world". In 1895 Berenson agreed to advise Mrs Gardner for a fee of five per cent. That same year he acquired for her twenty major paintings through Colnaghi's alone, Otto Gutekunst acting as the commercial agent. In 1897 he bought for her a Van Dyck, a Cima (later called "after"), a Titian (now Sanchez Coello), a Correggio ("influenced by"), a Crivelli, and two cassone panels by Pesellino. In 1898 he further acquired for her a Giorgione, a Rubens, the Inghirami Raphael, three Rembrandts, a Cellini bust, a Terborch, and a Masaccio; in 1899 two Holbeins, a Fra Angelico, a Rembrandt, a Fiorenzo da Lorenzo, a Raphael, and the Chigi Botticelli. By this date he was also advising Theodore Davis and Ned Warren, former friends from his Boston days. He continued to publish. Mary was "simply overwhelmed with Bernhard's genius". Mrs Gardner demanded an "adorable" Velázquez and a "heavenly" Raphael, and he knew where to find them.

He married Mary in 1900, by which time they were both Catholics and both lapsed. Depression and ill-health began to set in from this date and were to plague him for the rest of his life. Mary's cheeriness was undiminished. Owing to Berenson's horror of children she had an abortion at the end of 1901 and wrote to him from London, "I wish thee felt half as jolly as I am feeling now that the Anxiety is removed". She was a slapdash and extravagant housekeeper and more money was needed. By now Berenson was financing his whole family in Boston and he wanted a house of his own, that "great good place" that was to become the Villa I Tatti and which he was later to bequeath to Harvard. A triumphal tour of America in 1903 indicated how the money could be earned. A word from Berenson could add to or diminish the value of a painting; a recommendation from Berenson could secure a masterpiece from a hallowed private collection for an American museum. He became famous and rich.

But still more money was needed, and at this point, the point at which Ernest Samuels ends his exemplary biography, the sense of IT-ness seems to have become impaired by the necessities of commerce. Mrs Secrest, lively and critical, continues the story. Some time in 1906 Berenson changed sides and from being the buyer's advocate became the seller's. He joined forces with Duveen for a fee of twenty-five per cent. As all Duveen's sales were gilt-edged, heavily restored, and occasionally phoney, Berenson became enmeshed in those dubious business practices that flourished while the rage to collect swept across America, and which still hedge his name with an aura of compromise. It is still not clear how much commission he took from whom, but it was a great deal. "Trading up" became habitual. One goal, that of excellence, was exchanged for another: the acquisition and embellishment of I Tatti and the extension of himself as a work of art. It is to be hoped that Ernest Samuels will deal with this period in a further volume.

The activities, the journeyings, and the business dealings of Berenson and Mary became demonic. Their equilibrium suffered. Mary, who had previously enjoyed the sort of health appropriately designated as rude, developed a number of distressing ailments, possibly as a result of living the life beautiful. She put on weight and became slightly hysterical; Berenson, on the other hand, became smaller, tighter, and more cautious. There is some evidence that he found his position untenable although he was not to be freed from it until extreme old age. His autobiographical *Sketch for a Self-Portrait* fails to come to terms with the truth and races off on tangents and into anecdotes at the slightest opportunity. Either he does not know himself or puts up a resistance to knowing himself that would defy professional analysis. Mrs Secrest chronicles but cannot throw much light on this aspect of his life. She also chronicles the ups and downs of the Berenson marriage. Mary was attracted to younger men. Berenson himself was apparently irresistible to women although his own affections seem to have been slight, mean, and routine.

Ladies came and went, among them the stunning Gladys Deacon, and his injured self-esteem was slightly mended by their flattering insistence on hearing him discourse

When Mary died in 1945 she had long been replaced by the adoring Nicky Mariano, his devoted companion and housekeeper, who slept outside the door of his room when he fell ill. In her care Berenson ended his days and his last years were becalmed by her presence and the recovery of a sense of IT-ness which, as it is expressed in the late diaries, is nothing short of miraculous.

For the rest, he is an unsatisfactory but important figure. For he did something different with and for art. He did not look to it for consolation or for redemption or as a vehicle for a higher morality. Unlike his model, Pater, he did not use it to express his own unsatisfied desires. Pater on Botticelli has slender but painful insights, recognizing in *The Birth of Venus* a melancholy that mirrors his own: "... what is unmistakable is the sadness with which he [Botticelli] has conceived the goddess of pleasure, as a depositary of a great power over the lives of men".

In comparison, Berenson is brisk and intuitive; he does not yearn but clings tenaciously to the formal rhythm of the work. "The movement is directly life-communicating. The entire picture presents us with the quintessence of all that is pleasurable to the imagination of touch and movement." He has re-established the picture as an object to be scrutinized for what the artist put there and not for what the critic found there. Art history has learnt new techniques and many more words since his day. But as a model, journeying, crossing and re-crossing Italy, examining, questioning, remembering, he has not been surpassed.

Nor should he be. A sense of IT-ness is not within the reach of all of us but it is good to be reminded of it. Berenson, at the approach of death, learnt to use his eye more lovingly. Self, not easily laid aside in his case, gave way from time to time to a blessed receptivity. Despite the considerable efforts and fine scholarship of his two biographers—Professor Samuels faultless with the written evidence, Mrs Secrest adept at interpreting reminiscence—it is only fair to let Berenson have the last word, written in his ninetieth year:

> On balcony this morning between 4.15 and 4.45, flat quiet light, mother-of-pearl tone with touches here and there of rose in the sky. Water oily, seemed to be flowing in but drift went the other way. The Salute like an engraving, or rather an etching, Whistlerish. Watched the gradual lighting-up until I was too tired to wait for the full sunlight illuminating the entire sky. Giovanni Bellini and his immediate followers painted landscapes as if they did them at dawn, probably because they realized the impossibility of doing sunshine. They paint the pallid sunless sky in the evocative way that delights us in even such mediocrities as Basaiti or Bissolo. In Bellini himself the skies are always of pale dawn, except in the Berlin *Resurrection*, where he gives us a sky with crimson cloudlets that revive and inspire us with a fellow feeling for Him who rose from the dead as triumphant as the sun over darkness.

Held to ransom

By Paul Johnson

CAROLINE MOOREHEAD:
Fortune's Hostages
Kidnapping in the World Today
256pp. Hamish Hamilton. £8.95.
0 241 10320 7.

Caroline Moorehead has written a timely and absorbing book on a subject which is much more complicated than it seems at first glance. The word "kidnap" first appeared in 1688, when one John Dykes was "convicted of kidnapping or enticing away his majesty's subjects to go as servants into the foreign plantations". "As servants", of course, meant indentured labour, a form of slavery. This was how his wicked uncle intended to dispose of young David Balfour in Stevenson's marvellous tale *Kidnapped*. The indentures could be broken, at a price, paid by friends or relatives, so an element of ransom was involved. In essentials, then, plantation kidnapping was no different from the form of piracy practised along the Barbary Coast of North Africa for over a thousand years: the Moslem pirates captured Christian ships and raided villages and islands in the Christian sector of the Mediterranean. The captives were sold as slaves in the Algiers market but could be repurchased and restored to their families according to a definite tariff. And even this system was not really new. Pirates who kidnapped seafarers and held them to ransom were a feature of antiquity, and one of their victims, as Miss Moorehead reminds us, was Caesar himself.

Caesar handled his own case in his usual masterful fashion: his captors were rounded up and crucified, though as a concession he allowed them to have their throats cut on the first day. Society has always held kidnapping, a peculiarly cruel form of crime, in fierce abhorrence and reacted with all the savagery at its command. In Caesar's day the pirates had become a threat to the majesty of Rome itself, and Pompey's achievement was to destroy them, using an enormous fleet which swept from one end of the Mediterranean to the other, perhaps the largest and most successful police operation in history. It was the proudest claim of the Augustan Age that ships could proceed in safety throughout the inland sea; and it was a sinister sign of Rome's fading power when the pirates returned in the third century AD.

Thereafter, civilization had to compromise. It never condoned the trade; but it cooperated. In Medieval times it was an accepted fact that you had to pay up. Special redemptorist orders were created to raise the money, act as middlemen in Algiers, and bring the prisoners home. Not even Charles V at the height of his power could put the Barbary strongholds out of action. In the eighteenth century the Royal Navy gradually eliminated piracy on the oceans. But the Barbary menace remained until 1830 when the French occupied Algiers.

For the next hundred years a great peace descended, as large-scale kidnapping and piracy were virtually eliminated. One might say that the elimination of piracy coincided almost exactly with the Age of Imperialism, as in Rome's day. The great powers cooperated and there were no safe havens. Once the empires broke up, as they did in the 1940s and 1950s, a multitude of small, independent states re-emerged, and with them the piratical bacillus. Algiers and Tripoli now perform almost exactly the same role as they did between the eighth and the nineteenth centuries.

Miss Moorehead is careful to distinguish between the various forms of kidnapping, both in history and in our own day. She is particularly interesting on the subject of Sardinia. Kidnapping becomes a serious threat to society when those who practise it can produce a moral justification, however unreasonable, for their acts, and so enjoy some support from the law-abiding community. In Sardinia kidnapping is the trade of the shepherds, who see the rest of society, including the peasants (who get state credits), as a challenge to their very existence. Kidnapping, which they practise with impressive skill and great ferocity, is their response. They do not recognize the law as having any moral sanction. How could they? In Nuoro, the centre of the kidnapping area, Miss Moorehead tells us, an average trial lasts four years: "Since bail is unusual it is perfectly possible for a man to spend eight years in detention before being pronounced innocent."

Yet it is a mistake to argue that organized crime can ever be justified by political or social conditions. The whole of history teaches us that any law is always better than none. Both Sardinia and Sicily, where habitual crime also has a social sanction, are very unhappy places; and the spread of ideological crime to the mainland, which Miss Moorehead describes in chilling detail, is destroying Italy as a civilized community. The rich fear kidnapping most: but they can, and do, protect themselves. Hence, Miss Moorehead says, the kidnappers are turning increasingly to middle class victims, often men of very modest means.

Crime, like power, corrupts; and capital crime corrupts fundamentally. That is the lesson of Dostoievsky's great anti-terrorist novel, *The Devils*: no idealist can remain one for long when he engages in murder and cruelty. Miss Moorehead describes some of the unspeakable tortures inflicted on kidnap victims. It is impossible to believe that those who perpetrate them can still be, as they once perhaps were, humanitarians fired with a zeal for justice. Members of the PLO, IRA and other terror-gangs have become moral zombies, incapable of distinguishing between right and wrong except in terms of slogans.

There is, in fact, no such thing as "political" crime: only crime. Most serious crimes involve cruelty of one kind or another. Habitual criminals are nearly always people who lack the imagination to conceive of the sufferings of their victims. Crime prompted by modern ideologies is a result of a similar deadening of the senses produced by the hateful habit of thinking in terms of classes instead of individuals. The young ideologues who keep a man chained in a bleak underground concrete dungeon, blindfolded, his ears sealed with wax, for weeks or months, and then dispatch him without hesitation, do not see their victims as a man, but merely as a piece of political furniture. In the process they dehumanize themselves as well as he and become lost souls.

It is interesting to note that although modern terrorism has many historical antecedents, it really began immediately after World War One in Germany. Between 1919 and 1922 German right-wing terrorists killed 354 people and it was the failure of society to bring these criminals to book (they were allowed to plead political justification in court) which prepared the way for the state terror practised by Hitler.

The Nazis, as Miss Moorehead reminds us, also invented modern ideological kidnapping. In 1940, as part of their Lebensborn programme to improve "Aryan" stock, the Brown Sisters (the female counterpart of the SS), scoured concentration camps, schools and hospitals in the occupied countries, and rounded up thousands of blonde, blue-eyed children, nearly all of them under six. They were taken to reception centres at Kalisz, Poznan and Brockau, where they were inspected by race "experts". About one in 10 was pronounced fit for Aryan breeding and adopted by SS men who had no children of their own; the rest were sent to the ovens. As the selected were given new names, birth certificates and taught to speak German, some of them do not know to this day their true identity.

Likewise, modern fanatics of the left—who differ from the Nazis only in that they have an alternative set of cliché-arguments—find themselves living in a de-moralized universe, where ends and means have become hopelessly confused. They, too, are the lost children of Hitler. When ends and means are mixed, it is unlikely that the ends will be secured. Purely as a business proposition, kidnapping [illegible] pay.

Miss Moorehead says that Italy it has netted over £100m, most of it in the last five years; the cash is usually carried to Lugano in suitcases, where it vanishes into Switzerland, a fence and *maquereau* of the world. But kidnapping rarely brings anything but short-term political dividends. In Uruguay, Brazil and Argentina, it has merely led to increased military and police repression. The Germans have reacted with admirable steadiness, but even there civil rights have necessarily suffered; and Franz-Josef Strauss may yet prove the ultimate beneficiary. In Italy the democratic system, for this and other reasons, is now on its last legs, and it is impossible to see any successor but the military. Turkey is a similar example. The use of crime for political ends can only destroy: its individual victims are usually ordinary, bewildered men, women and children; its collective victim is invariably justice. Miss Moorehead has many sensible things to say about curbing kidnapping. In Italy, for instance, the banks have been hopelessly remiss in accepting large-denomination notes over the counter and so "laundering" them.

With terrorism, I take the sombre view that the only answer is large-scale international action against the points of refuge and supply, Tripoli being the most important. But a huge factor in the equation is publicity. In her excellent chapter on America in the 1930s, Miss Moorehead shows that the publicity produced by the Lindbergh case had the effect of increasing kidnapping, but that from the moment Edgar Hoover and his "G-Men" grabbed and held the headlines, the epidemic began to recede. Equally, the international terrorism of the last decade has been nurtured by publicity, much of it equivocal or even favourable. Like all professional criminals, terrorists like to read of their exploits. Publicity is their chief source of morale. And of all forms of publicity, television is most effective in recruiting and sustaining terrorists. The IRA owe much to Gaddafi, much to the Soviet Union, even more to the Irish-American community; but the most valuable of all their patrons have been the gentlemen of the media.

The weaving arts

By Stella Mary Newton

AGNES GEIJER:
A History of Textile Art
Translated by Roger Tanner
420pp. Pasold Research Fund/Sotheby Parke Bernet. £12,
0 85667 055 3.

Among students of textiles, their history and their preservation, the international reputation of Agnes Geijer, author of *A History of Textile Art*, stands exceedingly high. Specialists in the subject are, on the whole, concentrated in recognized centres: in England—London and Manchester; in Canada, Toronto; in West Germany, Munich; in France, Lyons, with its unique Musée historique des Tissues. Few, however, would deny that in the twentieth century Scandinavia has set a standard in the field of textile scholarship that has been an inspiration to the rest of the world.

The studies of Margrethe Hald and Sigrid Müller Christensen, both Danes, are now indispensable as a background to the investigation of ancient textiles but it is Agnes Geijer's early insistence on the importance of their treatment and preservation that has furnished the ethic on which all serious studies are based. She herself points out that in the past, owing to ignorance of their nature and composition, enormous quantities of textiles, as compared with other archaeological material, either perished at the time of excavation or have been allowed to disintegrate during succeeding ages. The wisdom of her warning, towards the end of the book, that "the conservation principle is a proper one, but its implementation requires above all experience, special knowledge and skills combined with a capacity for antiquarian and artistic appraisal" must, apart from anything else, earn her the gratitude of all those who are concerned with the study of textiles.

A History of Textile Art is already familiar to Scandinavian scholars; in presenting it seven years later in an "internationally viable language" (Dr Geijer's words) it will reach a wider public. Dr Geijer is herself a Swede, a fact that has contributed greatly to her own proficiency in the skills connected with the production of textiles and her capacity to appraise them artistically. In industrialized Britain the process of hand-weaving has long since retreated into the province of the amateur but in Sweden it survived as an essential part of rural life well into the present century. This enabled Agnes Geijer not only to [illegible] people had woven their household textiles from early times but to work at the loom herself, under the guidance of their successors.

The initial chapters of her *History* discuss the emergence, all over the world, of the implements with which woven textiles have been produced and the increasingly complicated techniques of weaving made possible by the invention of new forms of loom or the elaboration of old ones. While, because its style is austerely compact, this is no book for those who need a mnemonic to help them to remember the difference between warp and weft, the basic information it provides on the different terms used in the various parts of Europe to denote identical processes and types of weaving will be as valuable to beginners as to those whose studies are advanced.

Dr Geijer deals authoritatively with the problems involved in tracing both techniques of weaving and woven patterns to their countries of origin; the chapters which discuss the relationship between Chinese, Mongolian, Persian and Indian silks are among the most absorbing. She has no hesitation in demolishing opinions of earlier scholars but she readily praises contributions by those same scholars when time has proved them valid.

The far-ranging activities of Scandinavians in the field of international commerce are unfamiliar to most of those who have seen Asia mainly from the point of view of the British Empire, but Dr Geijer points out that in the ninth century "Russian sources call Swedes and their kingdom *Rus*" and that the Rus, sailing the Volga or rolling their ships overland on logs, regularly reached the Black Sea. Her own researches on ninth-century oriental textiles found on the Swedish island, Björkö, have not only formed an important part of her life's work but have conclusively demonstrated that most textile historians outside Scandinavia have taken too narrow a view of their subject.

The comparatively modest form in which *A History of Textile Art* has been produced in English is deceptive. About a hundred and twenty thousand words in length, together with comprehensive notes and a valuable bibliography, it is more than a handbook; nevertheless it is as a handbook that it will prove most valuable to those who are seriously interested in the study of textiles.

The Price Guide to 19th and 20th Century Pottery by David Battie and Michael Turner (243pp. The Antique Collectors' Club. £12.50. 0 902028 80 4) is the companion volume to *The Price Guide to 19th and 20th Century Porcelain* by the same authors. This handsome book, with 620 illustrations, will be welcomed by collectors for its detailed comments on so many pieces.

To Boris Pasternak

Distance: versts, miles ...
divide us; they've dispersed us,
to make us behave quietly
at our different ends of the earth.

Distance: how many miles of it
lie between us now — disconnected —
crucified — then dissected.
And they don't know — it unites us.

Our spirits and sinews fuse,
there's no discord between us,
though our separated pieces
lie outside
the mould—for eagles!

This conspiracy of miles
has not yet disconcerted us,
however much they've pushed us, like
orphans into backwaters.

— What then? Well. Now it's March!
And we're scattered like some pack of cards!

Marina Tsvetayeva

March 24, 1925. Translated by Elaine Feinstein

The good habit of indecision

By Stuart Hampshire

PAUL LEVY:
Moore: G. E. Moore and the Cambridge Apostles
360pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £12.50.
297 77576 6

Those who came from outside to Cambridge almost always heard G. E. Moore called "Moore", even by his wife, Dorothy. This dominance of surname somehow institutionalized him, as if he were part of Cambridge, as Newton and Darwin and J. J. Thomson were and are. One must first acknowledge that, in his place and in his time Moore was surrounded by truly great men who formed subsequent thought in the English-speaking world: Russell and Wittgenstein and Keynes, and, though prematurely dead with promise unfulfilled, Frank Ramsey. In a pettish reaction against too much Bloomsbury biography, some writers have tried to belittle this Cambridge and Bloomsbury circle. In a reasonable historical perspective this cannot properly be done. The achievements of this group of friends are with us still, for all to see, solid and enduring. Apart from the interest of personalities and of gossip about the great, there is an intrinsic intellectual interest in the early development and mutual influence of these thinking men.

It is surely useless also to be offended by the existence of cliques and exclusive intellectual circles of friends, who congratulate themselves on their intimacy with each other and who are sorry for the rest of the world, unlucky enough not to know them. To complain is to deplore the natural and perpetual way of the world: poets and painters, philosophers and architects, if they are men who intend to reconstruct established theories from the bottom upwards, always need intimate encouragement and reinforcement, always need both the criticism and the praise of the few friends who understand them. A conscious élite, a small group of excited men who see each other continuously for some years—these are the usual engines of advance and are likely to remain so. Paul Levy may sometimes be irritatingly pious in his admirations; but he must be right in seeing Moore's contemporaries at Cambridge as constituting a group which, taken as a whole, is still worth detailed study.

This book's contribution is to place Moore at the end, or near the end, of a line of Apostles, members of the society, going back to Hallam and Tennyson and beyond. Before Mr Levy's researches into Moore's papers and into other related sources, few people outside the society could have realized how deeply the young Moore was involved in the society's development and how important it was to his own education. He was the ideal and essential Apostle, and the Apostles were for him the core of Cambridge, and the centre of his early adult life. As an undergraduate he was cocooned in the friendships which the society provided: with Desmond MacCarthy, the Llewellyn Davies brothers, Lytton Strachey, Vaughan Williams, Ralph Wedgwood, Leonard Woolf, G. M. Trevelyan. Mr Levy quotes from a number of papers which he read to the society. They now seem, when extracted, surprisingly bad, partly because they belong to a peculiar genre of amateur philosophizing which the Apostles themselves had cultivated, partly because they evidently relied on a charm, and a tone of intimacy and candour, which are not adequately conveyed by the printed word.

Beginning with the conflict between established religion and the new sciences, as a new form of the old conflict between faith and reason, the society apparently circled around questions of *Weltanschauung* throughout its history; and this apparently called for personal confessions, declarations of belief and of feeling, which needed to be utterly truthful and pure and unworldly and unconstrained. So a Quakerish prose of self-conscious candour, of heartfelt intellectual conviction, came into use, and Moore was a master of it, often with humorous disclaimers: it became the natural style of Lowes Dickinson and there are echoes of it in Russell's writing up till the very end of his life. It is an acquired taste, but Mr Levy does not flinch. In some of the quotations from the society's meetings, one has the feeling of intruding upon a private correspondence, in which the occasional archness and whimsicality, painful in print, would seem to be more in place.

The design of the book places the young Moore, in the years preceding his marriage in 1916, at the end of a long line of distinguished Apostles, recalled and briefly described in the central section. Mr Levy does not write about the mature and influential philosopher of the inter-war years. The book ends in 1916, when Moore was forty-three, with much of his most influential work still to be done. The title correctly implies that one aspect of Moore's personality and talent and influence is under study, and not the whole history: certainly not Moore's contributions to philosophy, which are only mentioned lightly and incidentally.

Mr Levy does not attempt the history of ideas; he confines himself to biographical sketches of some of the worthies who formed the society's tradition in the nineteenth century and maintained it up till the First World War. He provides the pleasures that go with well-documented gossip about the past, the pleasure of looking at old photographs of the great and good, of bearded men arranged in groups and staring with well-justified confidence into the eyes of posterity. In an appendix there is a complete list of the Apostles' elections up to the First World War: Erasmus Darwin, John Sterling, Arthur Hallam, Alfred Tennyson, Richard Monckton Milnes, Frederick Pollock, Henry Maine, William Cory, Lord Stanley, William Harcourt, James Fitzjames Stephen, Clerk Maxwell, Henry Sidgwick, George and Otto Trevelyan, Richard Jebb, A. N. Whitehead, Roger Fry, Bertrand Russell, G. M. Trevelyan, G. H. Hardy, E. M. Forster, Lytton Strachey, Rupert Brooke, Ludwig Wittgenstein; this is a selection made for the pleasure of calling the roll, and Mr Levy supplies adequate short sketches of many illustrious men who did not similarly become household names: scissors and paste are very well used.

Behind the lists and personalities there is a serious story to be told, which Mr Levy touches upon but does not pursue: the tradition of strenuous free-thinking in the moral sciences as it evolved from the early utilitarianism of Priestley and Bentham through J. S. Mill and Henry Sidgwick; this tradition had its headquarters for much of the time in Cambridge, and may be said to have come to an end with G. E. Moore's *Principia Ethica* and *Ethics*, and with Russell's many essays in popular philosophy between the wars; and there was a prolongation, or epilogue, in the literary criticism of F. R. Leavis, and in his polemical essays on Bentham and Coleridge and on popular culture. There is a sharp edge of superior atheism, and of the high moral tone of true enlightenment, which is to be found in most of the Cambridge critics of earlier utilitarian thinking and in Sidgwick, Roger Fry, Moore, Forster. The established church, and the leaders of conventional opinion in both parties and in the press, were the targets to be attacked, as they had been for Mill and the Utilitarians. Mill and the Utilitarians had been clear, candid and free from transcendental cant, and they had been consistently naturalistic in their approach to moral problems and to the definition of morality; they had also dismissed the idea of salvation, whether in this world or in the next, and instead they had looked to public life and to the social order for reasonable improvement.

So far, so good; but Sidgwick, Fry, Moore, Forster and others of their different generations in Cambridge, felt a void left by Utilitarian calculations; something essential was missing, even after Mill's enrichments and elaborations of narrower Utilitarian ethics. The movement of Moore's thought away from Utilitarianism in *Principia Ethica* (1903) reveals that which was felt to be missing, one origin of the sense of void. Moore argued that the word "good" must stand for a non-natural quality of states of affairs. "Non-natural" is one cautious step away from "supernatural", a characteristic stopping short, a halfway house for one who has felt the void, but who could not, after the liberal enlightenment, contemplate the supernatural. If you expel the supernatural with a fork, it is apt to return by the back door, lightly disfigured as a truth of logic or epistemology: unless, that is, you are protected by a theory of the mind which represents its powers of perception and of thought as natural processes within the natural order. Moore was not so protected.

The greatness of Moore's teacher, Henry Sidgwick, author of *Method of Ethics*, is that he painstakingly treated the problems of moral philosophy as moral problems, and his *Method of Ethics*, after a long eclipse, is being revived, while *Principia Ethica*, greatly influential for fifty years after its publication, is beginning to fade and to become only a milestone in the history of thought. There is still a need for a comparative study of Sidgwick and Moore as moral philosophers, but this is far from Mr Levy's ambitions. He has more to contribute about Moore's complex relations with Russell, whom he evidently disliked throughout his life, in spite of their intimacy in philosophy. The evidence of this dislike, and of Moore's success in preventing Russell from coming to the reading parties that Moore organized, are one of the most interesting snippets of information in the book.

Even to those who saw him only in later years, and from a distance, it was evident that Moore's immense charm radiated in a manner that made him the natural centre of a circle. He dominated because of the utterly first-hand quality of his thought and speech. Although he seemed domesticated and sedentary and benign, his famous integrity, and ferocious defence of literal truth, as he conceived it, inspired respect and awe, at least when he was present in person. The most vivid comments on him quoted here come from Wittgenstein and Virginia Woolf: Wittgenstein—"He doesn't warm my heart (or very little) because what warms my heart most is human kindness, and Moore—just like a child—is not kind. He is kindly and he can be charming and nice to those he likes and he has great depth. That's how it seems to me. If I'm wrong, I'm wrong." Virginia Woolf: "He came [to stay] with a box like lead, and it was full of music books, which he meant to sing to us, but we had no piano, so he sang without one, some very nice old German and English songs. Do you know one about the 'foggy, foggy dew', and another about 'lost in the lowland seas'? He is a very great man, I think, so solid and direct and not the least hard to talk to."

Moore was eccentric as a philosopher and as a man, in one respect, and Mr Levy illustrates this eccentricity: he had an unlimited, and apparently naive, confidence in the power of pure thought to solve problems by itself and unattached to any specific discipline or science or to any established tradition of inquiry. The British Hegelians of the day, his friend McTaggart and F. H. Bradley in Oxford, relied on pure thought in constructing their metaphysics, but within a recognized tradition of metaphysical construction, and within a tradition that was not greatly concerned with definite solutions to definite problems. From his early years at Cambridge onwards, Moore was at all times ready to confront definite problems arising from the nature of good and evil, or of the external world, or of thought and language, or knowledge and belief, without the encumbrance of any scientific theory or any inherited technical apparatus of discussion. The exact use of words in entirely clear arguments, being something almost unheard of, would transform the problems, if anything could.

He had passed directly from classical scholarship to philosophy, untainted by the study of history or the social sciences. By his example, and the charm that he lent to philosophical argument, he spread the habit of "ordinary language" philosophy, as it came to be called, across the world, and particularly to Oxford, where his method took root. Mr Levy's lengthy quotations from papers read to the Apostles sometimes show this method of thought at its worst, almost in parody; morality and aesthetics and politics made cosy, personal, whimsical, provincial, naive, under-informed. Perhaps the reverse side of the coin of Moore's clarity, so much prized, is worth seeing.

Another snippet from a paper presented by Moore to the Apostles on character and habit ends, entirely characteristically, with these words: "It should always be in [the virtuous man's] mind that it is his nature to make the world and that he should have made it other than it is; not only made the best of it as it is. Among all the good habits we are to form we should certainly not neglect the habit of indecision." His talent verging on genius, and his power over others, was his habit of remaining undecided between belief and disbelief until the proposition before him, however familiar, had been examined, rectified and re-designed until it was utterly transparent and clear: a slow process for a long life, of which only the early part is chronicled here.

The communal idea

By Henry Gifford

EDWARD ACTON:
Alexander Herzen and the Role of the Intellectual Revolutionary
204pp. Cambridge University Press. £7.95.
0 521 22166 8

Herzen is for many the most attractive of Russian thinkers and probably the most gifted. In this lucid and well-argued essay, Edward Acton examines the central part of his career from 1847, when he left Russia for the West, until 1863, the end of a five-year period during which his journal *The Bell* had rung out commandingly in Russian politics. A first enthusiasm for the revolutions in Europe of 1848 led to disillusionment; this drove him back to concentrate on Russian problems, and to build his hopes on a specifically Russian form of socialism developing from the peasant commune. It was a more complicated process than is usually recognized. One particular merit of this book is that it relates the disasters of 1851-52 in Herzen's personal life with a new realism—even wisdom—in his political thinking. If there was something precious to foster in the commune, he also saw it bred passivity and gave despotism an easy chance. Aware that the Russian masses were as yet immature, he hung back from urging action.

So when after the fiasco of Emancipation it was obvious that he had misplaced his confidence in the government, he refused to give the positive call demanded by the radicals. Herzen had learnt the lesson of patience; they in their urgency dismayed him as overbearing and without his respect for the people, in whose name they were ready to dictate. After 1863 Herzen's role was at an end: the young no longer listened to him. Dr Acton's admirable study serves not only to put Herzen's own apologia *My Past and Thoughts* in a clearer perspective. It reinforces our sense of Herzen as a rarity among Russian publicists—one who could learn deeply from experience.

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Secker & Warburg

The quick and the dead

By Paul Bailey

STANLEY ELKIN:
The Living End
146pp. Jonathan Cape. £4.95
0 224 01759 4

Death is a constant presence in Stanley Elkin's fiction. In his first novel, the waywardly brilliant *Boswell*, the Grim Reaper appears as a wrestler named John Sallow who wins even those fights he is "fixed" to lose. Poor Leo Feldman, the hard-to-dislike anti-hero of *A Bad Man*, is conscious of something other than the skull beneath the skin because his problem lies in the region of his heart: this wily businessman, who sold his father's corpse to a hospital for $15, learns in middle age that he is the bearer of his unborn twin's foetus. Feldman's innumerable enemies are informed by his spiteful doctor that a blow in the right place—a straight aim at the homunculus—will ensure his speedy demise. The book ends with Feldman's vision of approaching fists.

Stanley Elkin is a connoisseur of worms and graves and epitaphs, of all those certainties that most of us keep out of mind. His work is particularly bracing to one who has visited, as I have, the Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Glendale, California, the verdant grounds of which are never defiled by that unhygienic creature the bird, who is scared off by the pre-recorded twitterers asserting their territorial rights in every tree and hedge. Nothing unpleasant ever plops on Dr Hubert Eaton's grisly paradise, where your friendly mortician is known as a "before need counsellor" and your beloved's blessed plot is afforded "perpetual beauty care". (This cosmetic treatment, I hear, will soon be at the disposal, as it were, of your beloved, too.) The cemetery in *Boswell* goes by its proper name. It is in this recognizable place that James Boswell is invited by a minister to offer a few words for the repose of his Uncle Myles's spirit. He does so, in a manner that only Elkin could have imagined:

> He lived a lousy life. His life was shit. Let's understand that. But he made allowances and he had his defences, his way of dealing with it. He should have been on the other side. He was sick, even when he was a young man. He had the shakes. He stuttered. He was always poor. He should have been on the other side! His resentments should have been against the well and the strong and the rich. But they weren't—they never were. My uncle thought like a banker. His sympathies were all with influence, with prestige, and he hated men of hard luck as though they had sinned against God, as though misery were illegal . . . Jesus, he was a snob!

The Living End is Stanley Elkin's shortest novel, and his finest. It is exhilarating from start to finish; the most sustained and dazzling performance that vaudeville's answer to Sir Thomas Browne has yet achieved. His earlier books, for all their cleverness, contain more ideas than they can manage—the insights take over, and the narrative grip is allowed to slacken. There is nothing slack or careless in *The Living End*, however: it has ideas in abundance, and they are none of them gratuitous.

The book is in three parts, and has three settings—Heaven, Hell, and Minneapolis-St Paul. It begins, ordinarily enough, in the Twin Cities, with the owner of a liquor store, Ellerbee, selling his business to a syndicate after a series of hold-ups in which one of his assistants has been severely injured and another killed. Ellerbee moves to a smarter area, in downtown Minneapolis, and his prospects brighten. His wife, May, starts sleeping with him again. So successful does he become that he seriously considers taking a vacation—to Phoenix, where his adoptive parents are in retirement. Then, on the night before his and May's departure to sunny Arizona, two hoodlums turn up in his new store. They rob the till and one of them shoots Ellerbee dead.

Guided by the Angel of Death ("I sound like a cabbie with an out-of-town fare. It's an occupational hazard"), Ellerbee advances to Heaven, a place which surprises him with its unsurprising sights, sounds, and smells: "They've actually got a Heavenly Choir"; "There are actually Pearly Gates"; "There's actually ambrosia"; "There are actually raiments", etc. An actual Saint Peter tells him, beatifically, to go to Hell, and he does.

Hell, "the ultimate inner city", gives him the shock of recognition too: "They actually have horns"; "There are actual pitchforks". Year later, later, he asks God—down there on a visit—for an explanation. God rants and raves and evades the issue. Ellerbee insists. He doesn't want the brush-off; he wants the truth:

> None of this what-was-I-doing-when-You-pissed-the-oceans stuff, where I was when You colored the nigger and ignited Hell. I wasn't around when You shaped shit and fashioned cancer. Were *You* there when I loved my neighbor as myself? When I never stole or bore false witness? I don't say when I never killed but when I never even raised a hand or pointed a finger in anger?

Elkin's God's answer to this good man's heartfelt question is typically mean-spirited and petty. He is a Creator who gets peevish over small matters, partly perhaps because He finds His Job a Chore. He tells Ellerbee's murderer's accomplice, the unfortunate Ladlehaus, something of His Difficulties:

> Omniscience gives Me eyestrain. I'll let you in on something. I wear contacts. Oh yes, I grind the lenses Myself. They're very strong. Well, you can imagine. *You'd* go blind just trying them on. And omnipotence—*that* takes it out of you. I mean if you want to work up a sweat try omnipotence for a few seconds.

To proceed further with an account of the plot of *The Living End* would be to spoil for its readers much of the book's power to startle and entertain. The second part of the novel, entitled "The Bottom Line", invokes a state of nothingness as horrifying in its different way as the one Philip Larkin describes in his marvellous poem "Aubade". And in the final section, "The State of the Art", *The Living End* becomes something of a celestial thriller, with the Dice in His Hands.

The ease with which Stanley Elkin mingles the sombre and the farcical is quite astonishing. In the closing pages of *The Living End* he writes with a grandeur and an eloquence he has only hinted at before. The dead, the overwhelming majority, rise up from the oceans, from the deserts, from graves both modest and ornate, only to receive from their Maker a telling-off as ludicrous as it is credible. Elkin's Almighty has none of the terminal cuteness displayed by the talented George Burns in the recent film *Oh God!*—he reminds me, rather, of the late Donald Wolfit, whose curtain-calls were an act in themselves. God, in *The Living End* is the Great Upstager, with the world's millions as his supporting cast.

The Virgin Mary, aggrieved that she is regarded as the Lord's slut, is in attendance, and so is Jesus, and so is Joseph. They are victims, every one, just like the madman, Quiz, and the child, Elanoy, and the rest of the human flotsam that drift in and out of the narrative. *The Living End* is destined for survival and will surely be celebrated as a minor classic. It merits pride of place on the same shelf as *The Loved One* and *Memento Mori*.

Sturm in a teacup

By Victoria Glendinning

STEVIE SMITH:
Over the Frontier
272pp. Virago. £2.50 paperback.
0 86068 130 0

Oh, we are plunged straight away, are we not, into the peculiar Pompey-prose of *Novel on Yellow Paper* which was such a success when it came out in 1936. *Over the Frontier*, now reissued in the Virago Modern Classics series, was its sequel; it picks up Pompey-Stevie where she was left, deep in "the sadness of a mismanaged love-situation, that is so much at this moment the situation between my departed Freddy and myself". This is all "as dear and familiar as home to lovers of Stevie Smith's poetry and earlier prose", as Janet Watts writes in her good introduction. But we are in for surprises. We have already been told, in the earlier book, much about Freddy, and about Pompey's life with her Lion Aunt. For many pages of *Over the Frontier* Stevie Smith circles round them again, while seeming to search for new material and a new mode.

Her subject, it becomes clear, is the coming war; *Over the Frontier* was published in 1938. Pompey is oppressed by events in Italy, in Abyssinia, by the marshalling of the big battalions, by alliances, pacts, reports of atrocities. She looks at the paintings of George Grosz in a London gallery. "Oh war war is all my thought." What does it mean to be "English"? "There can be no good art that is international. Art to be vigorous and *gesund* must use the material at hand. *Numen inest*."

Yet Pompey must have a change of scene. After her Freddy-induced breakdown, she takes six months' leave from her office and a supply of tranquillizers ("enough to keep a tiger quiet") and takes a holiday in a Schloss in north Germany, where she goes riding with Captain Tom Satterthwaite, and falls in love with him. But he is always thinking about gun-emplacements, which saddens her. His exclusive masculinity drives a wedge "between the sort of work that is men's work and the sort of work that is women's work":

> Phew, how I do detest this. Never again in England I think shall we breed exclusively masculine and exclusively feminine types at any high level of intelligence, but always there will be much of the one in the other. . . . And at a high level of intelligence it is a game, and can afford to be a game, for intelligence is sexless and has its own weapons, and these are well matched . . .

In Germany, Pompey finds out just how much of the male aggressive-destructive element there is in herself. It begins in conversation. "And the Jews?" asks Captain Tom; and at once Pompey is "in despair for the racial hatred that is running in me in a sudden swift current, in a swift tide of hatred". Timid, inadequate Pompey, in exploring her own attitudes, explores war. She intuits that "friendship is a more final truth than policy or the argument of history, for it goes deeper than either and touches the root of something . . . compared with which policy is the most frivolous of tea-cup chatter".

Half-way through the book, Pompey takes off from her musings and the tea-cup chatter of the Schloss and enacts a fantasy. Captain Tom puts her in military uniform, and the uniform releases all her lurking pride, anger and intolerance. She and Tom ride out by night over the frontier, into a country at war. At first she is protected, cradled in Tom's arms like a child. But she turns out to be much better than Tom at decoding the secret messages from headquarters. Her judgment is sounder than his in the vague, Rupert-of-Hentzau excitements of her war-dream. "I have succeeded where he has failed, and the messages that come through to us are for me, not for him". She rides out alone, is always "busy", kills an enemy. The roles are reversed. As Pompey grows stronger Tom grows weaker, "on occasion petulant, frivolous, irrational and obstinate". Has he become a woman, and she a man?

"I grind my teeth", says Pompey, "to think of Germany and her infection of arrogance and weakness and cruelty . . .". Yet she feels in her own hard soldierly effectiveness the splendour of the military, masculine world as well as its horror. Warriors are "the flower of humanity, the poison flower not less lovely for its venom". She herself, who was a coward even in the dentist's chair was "shanghaied into this adventure, forced into a uniform I intuitively hated. But if there had been nothing of me in it . . .?"

Having discovered "it"—the power-lust, the killer instinct—in herself, Pompey draws some conclusions, asking herself whether "power and the lust for power" are not "the prop of our survival, our hope for the future". Is not national feeling just a bid for the power that hardly anyone can achieve as a private person? The last sentence of the book is: "Power and cruelty are the strength of our life, and in its weakness only is the sweetness of love."

The cold night-rides and the coded messages and Pompey's ruthless efficiency have all, surely, been a dream. A sort of joke. This was perhaps how Stevie Smith tried to straddle the frontier between private and public issues. She was very inhibited against "serious" writing. In the tentative early part of this book Pompey says: "There are some writers, I name no names, that make a lot of money writing about pain, pain is to them an inexhaustible fount of inspiration and a regular income." But how to be funny always, about everything? "There is nothing worse than the not quite funny enough. . . . Indeed it is better to be serious."

There is another frontier faced in the book. Pompey's world in *Novel on Yellow Paper* was Stevie Smith's own world, and she writes here, before the dream begins, "Oh the folly and weakness of foreign travel in search of inspiration. We carry our own wilderness with us . . .". But nothing could be more "foreign", or further from Palmers Green, than Pompey's excursions into the Baltic night with her military cloak flying behind. Her much-apostrophized "dear Reader" understands, however, that it is the wilderness of her own *animus* that she is exploring.

Frontiers are inconclusive and uncomfortable places, and this is an inconclusive and uncomfortable book. It could justifiably be faulted for archness, evasiveness, affectation, for being "not quite funny enough". But I don't want to do it. If once one falls under Stevie Smith's spell, either through her prose or her poetry, her teeterings between the painful and the comic, her very uncertainties, put her not beyond criticism but beyond rejection.

Junkie jottings

By Galen Strawson

HELEN GARNER:
Monkey Grip
245pp. Virago. £5.95.
0 86068 115 7

Monkey Grip is hardly a novel; it is more like someone's diary. A real someone, I should say—though with a few imaginary twists and camouflaging turns let in, and some additional *aperçus* interpolated. People, places, occasional jobs, burst into the text utterly unintroduced—as they would in a private diary.

It's a diary of a storyless life. It just starts, it goes on, it just stops: no plot, no thickening, no knot, no *dénouement*. It could be read backwards. Not because of Burroughsian cut-up: individual sections move ordinarily forwards in regular prose. It's just that the life as a whole does not do so, and could so easily have happened in a different order. There is no development of a theme, no progressive revealing of a character, no sustained enrichment of a reflection.

But in this the book is true to three things—its subject, its form, and its author. It is triply fragmentary. The way of life described is fragmentary—drop-outs on the dole in a warm climate, frequently stoned. The diary as a literary genre is fragmentary. And the author/protagonist's natural way of apprehending the world is fragmentary—she is one of those who seem to live most fully in the interstices of the main events of ordinary [illegible] them in traditional narrative.

Much of the book consists of Nora's violently blue-eyed junkie lover Javo erupting into her bedroom in the middle of the night, blasted on junk, sometimes going up, sometimes coming down, sometimes strung out in withdrawal. Single mother with a daughter, often with some other child in hand, Nora gets up for the children when Javo sleeps on, to "serve them out of her dream" on a broken night's sleep. Javo periodically goes cold turkey, but each time the junk monkey clambers back. Revolving in a promiscuous Melbourne circle of implausibly good-humoured friends, film-freaks and rock musicians, feminists and junkies, Nora and Javo are at times almost close, as close as the junk will allow—"mates". Then Javo drifts again, out and away from Nora. From these things—parties, cafes, trips, gigs—a saccadic inconsequential life is made. Nora suffers obliquely, doubly confounded; helpless before Javo's drug commitment, yet ruefully self-condemned by her feminist tenets for her recidivist pair-bonding love. But, convincingly, no tragedy develops. The pains just get lost in the vague fractions of hip everyday life. Towards the end, Nora is "suddenly filled with a certainty that fucking occupied far too important a place in all (their) lives". Gerald, a bedfellow, disagrees. They are both right, of course.

Monkey Grip has a laconic documentary charm, a disarrayed ingenuousness. It won the Australian National Book Council Award, and could come out well in the film version which Pat Lovell (producer of *Picnic at Hanging Rock*) is working on. But with no narrative development to draw them in, many, I think, will read it through only for the clutch of poised phrases and fine insights.

Ancestral portraits

J. I. M. STEWART:
Our England is a Garden
201pp. Gollancz. £4.95.
0 575 02677 4

The four moral tales in J. I. M. Stewart's *Our England is a Garden* are concerned with the destruction of an old order exemplified by country-house life or by memories of a vanished childhood world. As in *The Spoils of Poynton*, houses are the focus of a more than personal tragedy and precious things cause those who own them to be peculiarly hurt. In the title story the cook's son becomes the last owner of "Ridings", and he participates in its final decline. "George" tells how the Pryatts of "Clover House" lose all that made life worthwhile. "A Private Life" shows us the distinguished historian John Mannering remembering to his cost every minute detail of his childhood. "Teddy Lester's Schooldays" concerns an eccentric scientist's obsession with schoolboy literature. The employers are at the mercy of those they employ (the "treasures" Gurnie, Nannie Bruce, the indispensable George) and it could be said that we are shown how fate works by means of the servant problem. The stories are nicely rounded off in a way that suggests that the disturbance of a well-established life-style leads to death or the lunatic asylum.

Part of the pleasure of reading J. I. M. Stewart comes from a certain snobbish delight in the details of a more gracious past evaluating ancestral portraits, and in the niceties of addressing gardeners or choosing wine. He is not an author who comments directly on the causes of upheaval but he recounts effects, and the poignancy of the stories are not diminished by the intermittently humorous view he takes of his gentlefolk (many of whom are more than slightly dotty). We sympathize more fully with their doubts and anxieties once the edge has been taken off our disapproval in this way (just as by the same means our envy of their *objets* is effectively stilled).

Lindsay Duguid

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Bulwarks against Bismarck

By A. J. P. Taylor

GEORGE F. KENNAN:
The Decline of Bismarck's European Order
Franco-Russian Relations, 1875-1890
466pp. Princeton University Press. £15
0 691 05282 4

George Kennan has a remarkable gift. He takes some historical development which has been a commonplace for many years and announces it as a startling discovery. Here for instance is the springboard for *The Decline of Bismarck's European Order*. "I came to see World War I . . . as *the* great seminal catastrophe of this century." Well, well. As Oscar Wilde said, "I not only follow you; I precede you". Kennan's next discovery is that "the Franco-Russian alliance of 1894 was without doubt one of the major components out of which the fateful situation of 1914 was constructed".

This is only marginally true. The Franco-Russian alliance at first strengthened the Balance of Power and was therefore a force for peace during the first ten years of its existence. It was the weakening of this alliance by Russia's defeat in the Russo-Japanese war, rather than the alliance itself, that made the European situation unstable. Nor did the two allies go to war in 1914 because of the alliance. They were driven to war by unacceptable demands from Germany—Russia to arrest her mobilization, France to pledge neutrality and surrender Toul and Verdun. The ultimate decision for a general European war was made by Schlieffen, the German Chief of Staff, in 1892, two years before the Franco-Russian alliance was concluded, when he laid down that any future war must be for Germany a war on two fronts—first a knock-out blow against France and then an offensive against Russia. Every ultimatum before the outbreak of war in 1914 was made by the Germans except for the British ultimatum over Belgium and even that was a consequence of the Schlieffen plan. Never mind, let this pass. The background of the Franco-Russian alliance is itself an interesting, even an entertaining subject, and this is what Kennan's book is about.

Kennan promises a further discovery: that in 1914 there was a "delirious euphoria . . . seeing the onset of some new and wonderful historical era, pregnant with pleasing self-sacrifice, adventure, valor, and glory". Maybe this was true in 1914, though I think it has been overdone. The euphoria, so far as it existed, came after the outbreak of war rather than provoking it. In any case there was little of this euphoria in the period with which Kennan's book deals. There were some nationalist fanatics in France, such as Déroulède and Boulanger clamouring for *revanche*. There were Pan-Slavs in Russia, Katkov outstanding among them. Kennan chronicles their activities most effectively, but they had little to do with the actual making of the Franco-Russian Alliance.

The oddest feature of the book is that there is no clear exposition of its ostensible subject: Bismarck's European Order. The Austro-German Alliance is taken for granted without any discussion of the curious circumstances in which it was made. Kennan much approves of this Alliance: "The Austro-Hungarian Empire [correct title: Austria-Hungary] still looks better, as a solution to the tangled problems of that part of the world, than anything that has succeeded it". So one might say: "The first British Empire in North America still looks better, as a solution to the tangled problems of that part of the world, than anything that has succeeded it." This would be a very foolish thing to say.

There is towards the end of the book an admirable, though brief, exposition of Bismarck's preference for peace and the status quo on the rational grounds that Germany had nothing to gain by war against either Russia or France and that therefore war must be avoided. There is, however, little about the means by which Bismark strove to achieve this aim, hardly any mention for instance of his manoeuvres between Russia and Great Britain, which were more important than his dealings with France. Indeed no one could guess from Kennan's account that Great Britain, not Germany, was the principal antagonist of both Russia and France during the period covered by his book. Russia came near to war with Great Britain in 1878 and again in 1885, when the usually pro-Russian Gladstone asked for war credits from the House of Commons, while the French displayed more resentment over the British occupation of Egypt than over the lost provinces, though not to the point of war, at least not until 1898.

However there is certainly a good story to be made out of the preliminaries to the Franco-Russian Alliance, even if a less decisive one than Kennan claims. Bismarck provided the theme for Kennan's book when he wrote in 1887, "Our relations with Russia depend exclusively on the personal feelings of the Tsar Alexander III". This is not entirely true: Giers, the Russian foreign minister, also wanted good relations with Germany, but not to the point of offending his imperial master. In the last resort decision certainly rested with The Autocrat.

The trouble was that Alexander III could rarely make up his mind. Here again Kennan gets the emphasis wrong. He assumes that Alexander III was obsessed with the ambition to make Bulgaria part of the Russian Empire. The actual situation was more complicated. Kennan forgets the Bulgarian Horrors. Alexander III in his practical moments had no concern in the Near East except to keep the Straits closed against the Royal Navy. But, unlike Kennan, he could never forget that Russia had gone to war against Turkey as a crusade and that the statue of Alexander II, the Tsar Liberator, stood, as it still stands, in the principal square of Sofia. Like other liberators later, Alexander III felt that he should direct the country his father had liberated and was outraged when the Bulgarians did not take the same view.

This is far from supposing that he thought Bulgaria worth another war. Russian ambitions at this time lay in central Asia and later in the Far East. Bulgaria was a sentiment, not an essential aim. When in the second Bulgarian crisis of 1887, Russia was confronted by the Mediterranean Entente of Bismarck's manufacture—Austria-Hungary, Great Britain and Italy—Alexander III turned his back on the Bulgarian affair and henceforward forgot all about it.

Curiously enough both Alexander III and the French politicians had much the same outlook as Bismarck. Just as he thought that the Pan-Slavs and the French nationalists might break loose, they thought that Bismarck might be unable to control the new generation of Germans and the new German generals. All three parties wanted security and this was the practical motive behind the Franco-Russian Alliance, an alliance that would deter the Germans if their militarists got out of hand. There is a further curiosity in regard to the Franco-Russian Alliance. However bellicose it might appear, its practical effect was to restrain the contracting parties.

The French wished to recover the lost provinces and to expel the British from Egypt. Alexander III insisted in every conversation with a French representative that an essential pre-condition of the Alliance was that the French should forget Alsace and Lor-

The Goldfish

Everything that is beautiful must be taken away
As that goldfish was: shining, and plated with gold,
Its mouth trembling, its eye stony with solicitude:
I gasped when I saw it; it was my own cry.

C. H. Sisson

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raine. As to Egypt, the Russians were willing to vote with the French on the Caisse de la Dette, but they had no intention of giving the French any military support, as appeared clearly enough during the Fashoda crisis of 1898.

The French on their side wanted Russian intervention if they were at war with Germany. But they were rigidly opposed to Russian aims in the Near East so far as these existed. They gave Russia no support in Bulgaria. They resisted Russian control of the Straits even when Great Britain lost interest in the question. Indeed in 1896 Salisbury was willing to see Russia at Constantinople; the French would agree at no lesser price than their recovery of the lost provinces. To look further forward, the French did not yield over Constantinople until 1915 and then only temporarily.

If Russia and France could not derive any gains from their Alliance, why did they make it? It is the great value of Kennan's book to provide much of the answer. With the French the motive was simple apprehension. In their view France had been wilfully attacked by Germany in 1870—a view that Kennan shows to have been wrong. Therefore Germany might repeat the attack at any moment. Apprehension was the motive for the moderates. The French nationalists went further: the Alliance would not only give France security, it would enable her to launch an aggressive war for the recovery of Alsace and Lorraine. How this could be achieved against the Tsar's express veto, they did not stop to inquire. Alexander had no apprehension of a great attack from Germany. What he feared, justifiably enough, was German intervention in a war between Russia and Austria-Hungary. But how would the French alliance help him? Russian concerns in the Balkans were no affair of the French as they showed clearly enough in the Bosnian crisis of 1908-09. Despite all the great talk about a diplomatic revolution, the French and the Russians moved towards an alliance to free themselves from an apprehension that was in fact largely imaginary. As this is the reason why most Great Powers make alliances, this conclusion is not surprising.

Kennan skirts round this prosaic explanation. The rich material for his book comes from the doings of the Pan-Slavs and their French confederates. Like many projectors they imagined they had a chance of success and Alexander III did not discourage them. Alexander III admired Katov and enjoyed talking to the French high-fliers. He was tied to Germany by respect for William I, his great-uncle. With William II it was the other way round. Then Alexander III's dislike of this tiresome young man made him welcome a gesture of independence, but not one from which any practical action would follow. There were many other factors, principally, of course, French money. Kennan gives an excellent account of the way in which French financiers combined patriotic investment with a considerable profit.

It might, however, be argued that the Austrians, or to be precise the Hungarians, did more than either Russians or French to wreck Bismarck's European Order. The Austrians never liked the League of the Three Emperors which cut across their exclusive Alliance with Germany. The Hungarians wanted to play a great role in the Near East and to avenge the Russian intervention which destroyed independent Hungary in 1849. The hotheaded talk of the Hungarians during the crisis of 1887 did more than that of the Pan-Slavs or the French nationalists to push Alexander III towards alliance with France. The Reinsurance Treaty of 1887, Bismarck's last achievement, was, as Kennan observes, of no great moment, nor was the failure to renew it in 1890. Ironically its terms were technically compatible with those of the Franco-Russian Alliance, though few historians have remarked on this.

Kennan treats the year 1890 as the decisive moment: breach between Germany and Russia, impending alliance between France and Russia. For a short run the Franco-Russian Alliance strengthened its two partners, though more against Great Britain than against Germany or even Austria-Hungary. The British prepared to abandon Constantinople and feared they might lose control of the Mediterranean. It all blew over. The Russians turned from the Near to the Far East; the British consolidated their hold over Egypt. Austro-Russian relations improved. In 1897 the two Empires put the Balkans "on ice", and their cooperation continued happily for ten years. Even the estrangement between Russia and Germany was not permanent. Nicholas II who succeeded Alexander III in 1894 regarded the Franco-Russian Alliance as an unfortunate legacy from his father which as a loyal son he must dutifully observe. But he was on good terms with his cousin William II and spent his summer holidays in Germany, not in France.

Kennan concludes that war will be "apocalyptically destructive" of civilization and hopes that statesmen will learn this truth from his study of the Franco-Russian Alliance. Many historians have had similar hopes. No statesman has taken any notice of them.

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Tending towards decay

By Jonathan Sumption

HUGH THOMAS:
An Unfinished History of the World
700pp. Hamish Hamilton. £12.50.
0 241 10282 0

Georges Lefebvre, the great historian of the French Revolution, paid lip-service to a fashionable convention by beginning his history of it with a survey of the world in 1789. It is a feast of learning, including masterly summaries of the situation in India and Japan on the eve of the storming of the Bastille. But at the end of his vignette of the constitution of China, the Master falters. The great majority of the world's population, he remarks, neither knew nor cared about the revolution and were quite unaffected by it for several generations.

There have been other, more sustained, attempts to portray European history in a world context, but few of them have been animated by any firm conviction of the usefulness of the exercise. How could it be otherwise? "The World" as such has not had a history until very recent times. There have been only the separate histories of its separate parts. On occasions the life of one civilization flows into another, but they are infrequent, brief, and usually violent occasions.

In filling the gaps between these irruptions, historians of the world may adopt one of two methods. The first is to formulate general laws governing the formation and decay of societies, and then to consider the history of each society in turn as an illustration of those laws. This approach, whose most celebrated exponent was Arnold Toynbee, certainly makes for coherence. But it involves distorting history by emphasizing the respects in which human experience has been uniform, at the expense of the far more significant respects in which it has been varied and eccentric.

The second method (by far the commonest) is to write a chronological history of each society in each period successively. The joints can be smoothed over with literary skill, but they never altogether disappear. No amount of literary skill can conceal the fact that what one has at the end of the process is two dozen books for the price of one.

Hugh Thomas has atttempted to devise a third method, but the curious title, *An Unfinished History of the World*, perhaps betrays his unease at the result. The word "unfinished" was presumably added after, not before, the book was written and was no doubt intended to convey that the work was raw, not that it was incomplete—like Michelangelo's unfinished slaves rather than Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony.

The object, as we are told at the outset, was to write a history of the world "on thematic rather than chronological lines". The lines are not entirely thematic for the work is divided into two broad chronological bands meeting at about the year 1750. Within these bands a number of narrowly circumscribed "themes" are considered entirely without regard to chronological or indeed any other kind of order: underwear, timepieces, tax, cutlery, contraception, water-power, maps, magicians, malaria, all come helter-skelter into view and on each the opinion of everyone from Herodotus to Dr Johnson is quoted. It is, as the author concedes in a moment of candour, a "multitude of odd and banal facts, arranged so cavalierly as in a bazaar". Opening at a single random page we find the proposition that large families have generally been regarded as desirable, vouched by the authority of Gibbon, Septimus Severus, the ancient Greeks, St Thomas Aquinas, Leon Battista Alberti, Luther, Muhammad, Machiavelli, Bodin, Juan de Mariana, Vauban, Frederick the Great, Montesquieu, Raynal and David Hume in that order. On the same page Tertullian and Origen are cited for the contrary view. It is an impressive range of learning stretching over more than two millennia. But did the proposition mean the same for all these worthy personages?

In truth, a historian can no more abandon chronology than he can abandon language. Chronology is the essential framework within which events make sense and without which they are a mere jumble of miscellaneous and eminently forgettable information.

It is easy enough to precede one's account of every invention of the English eighteenth century with the observation that something rather similar was discovered in China two thousand years earlier. One has only to consult at every stage the index of Joseph Needham's encyclopedic history of *Science and Civilisation in China*. It is no doubt salutary to learn that technology is not a Western monopoly. But if these facts are to have any other significance they must be set in a chronological framework formed by other technological developments as well as by the intellectual, economic and political history of the period. Of that period and no other.

One instance of the defects of this "thematic" approach (a thousand others would make the point) is the author's treatment of the history of the Roman world in the third century AD. A number of "themes" are illustrated from this fascinating period: the pressure of external invasion, the threat of famine, the experiments with various types of authoritarian government, the religious ferment, the depopulation of the countryside, the great inflation. The most important point about these various phenomena is that they are all interconnected. Yet this is the one point which his rejection of chronology prevents him from making. Each of these manifestations of the last crisis of the pre-Christian Empire appears in a different part of the book.

Instead of being related to the events which gave rise to it and the consequences which flowed from it, the inflation of the third century, for example, is plucked out of its context and parcelled up with a miscellaneous collection of inflations including the German inflation of 1920-21, the inflation of Chinese paper money in the thirteenth century, and the building boom of the emperor Nebuchadnezzar in the sixth century BC. "Several points should be made" is the introductory sentence of this remarkable paragraph. But at the end of the paragraph no point at all has been made, except that inflations occur from time to time in various parts of the world.

The rejection of chronology does not (as the blurb proclaims) "enable the author to cast many new and curious lights on familiar things". What it does is to obfuscate the historical truths which are perfectly clear in the books which Mr Thomas has read, and to obscure the insights which he is unquestionably capable of giving us. The one redeeming factor is that in the second part of his book, he concentrates so heavily on Europe and on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that he has little need of chronological framework. But that is only to say that he is no longer writing a history of the world.

In these respects Mr Thomas may unwittingly have supplied future historians with material for understanding the intellectual mood of the 1970s. Two distinctive features of his work have to be noted. The first is his implicit rejection of any notion that the flow of history has some natural direction. The second is the absence of any real interest in the distant past for its own sake: what interests him is the present.

Chronological history is above all history for an age which believes that events are guided by some higher purpose. It is difficult to enjoy a chronological narrative unless one believes that one is getting somewhere, whether that "somewhere" be the perfection of the British constitution, the dictatorship of the proletariat or the last trump. Chronological history was the hallmark of eighteenth and nineteenth-century optimism, the "pleasing conclusion that every age of the world has increased and still increases the real wealth, the happiness, the knowledge and perhaps the virtue of the human race": Gibbon's words and the thoughts of many others.

But they are not Mr Thomas's thoughts. He is too scrupulous a historian to believe with Spengler and Toynbee that civilization is doomed by the operation of inevitable laws. At the same time he is unable to share the glowing optimism of Gibbon against a background of fuel crises, food crises, population crises and the like. There is no consistent direction in history, no scheme discernible in the past of which the historian can feel himself to be a part. Indeed, just as progress can always be obstructed by perversity or wickedness, so it is "always possible to reverse an apparently fatal tendency towards decay, however late the hour".

"However late the hour". This is an overtly political book. Almost two thirds of it deals with the industrialization of the Western world in the past two centuries and much of that is concerned with current political problems: inflation, shortage of raw materials, the weakening of the morale of the Western democracies, trade union power. There is even a quotation from one of Mrs Thatcher's speeches. More than this, in dealing with earlier periods and other civilisations, Mr Thomas's selection of his "themes", and of the facts which illustrate them, is very strongly influenced by modern preoccupations. Yet this is not because he supposes that ours are the gravest problems which have ever afflicted human societies. His emphasis upon them is part of the purpose of his book, not one of its conclusions.

Mr Thomas's overriding concern with modern problems has not only determined his method but has often intruded into his judgments. In spite of his rejection of the Whig interpretation of history, his views are surprisingly Whiggish. From the great nineteenth-century Swiss historian Jacob Burckhardt he borrows the over-wrought view of the Emperor Frederick II as an oriental despot transforming his subjects into a "multitude destitute of will" and contrasts him with the more paternal and law-abiding kind of monarch (like, presumably, Henry II of England or Philip the Fair of France). The Christian Church, although absolved of the charge of destroying the Roman Empire, is depicted in language worthy of Gibbon as the enemy of the intellect and the friend of credulity and slavish conformity. England is shown to have earned her prosperity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by her free constitution while France stagnated under a succession of authoritarian regimes. It is all somewhat reminiscent of the orthodoxy of Bertrand Russell's relations who taught him that everything done against kings was good, unless it were done by priests.

Mr Thomas's Whiggishness is more pensive than theirs was but both are engaged in the study of the past with the assumptions of the present. For example, Mr Thomas takes it for granted that the economic policies of governments deserve attention because they can be put into effect and that assumption has sometimes been justified by modern history. Nevertheless until the eighteenth century the policies of governments scarcely mattered, whether they were despotic or paternalistic, law-abiding or no. Governments were generally ill-served, ill-financed and ill-informed, incapable of applying outside narrow limits such principles as they could be said to have. In these circumstances the principal respect in which liberty-loving countries differed from tyrannous ones was in making a virtue of a necessity. It was a very real virtue, but its effect on the development of the nation cannot have been very great. The temptation to construct a case for political and economic liberty based on the success of eighteenth-century England is one which ought to be resisted.

Indeed there is hardly any historical theme which will not be distorted by being used in support of a political argument. History, as Mr Thomas observes, "dominates political life". So long as political propaganda derives its persuasive force from myth it will continue to do so. With the failure of religious conviction in most Western societies, history is the only source of myth.

I would not dissent from Mr Thomas's concluding observation that democrats should study history. They should do so in order to penetrate the political propaganda of their opponents, and in order to apply some sense of proportion to the study of modern problems. If there are to be libertarian myths to counter totalitarian ones it would be wise to leave their invention to professional politicians. They will do the job most expertly.

The exemplar of the avant-garde

By Robert Boyers

OCTAVIO PAZ:
Marcel Duchamp: Appearance Stripped Bare
Translated by Rachel Phillips and Donald Gardner
211pp. New York: Viking. $10.95.

The avant-garde is by now an historical phenomenon. To intone the names of Picasso, Stravinsky, Apollinaire, or of more recent figures like John Cage and Jackson Pollock, is to remember that the phenomenon has been with us for almost a century; that we have talked it to death; and that no object is any longer likely to offend even the most ardent philistine. Though participants in the avant-garde may be variously described, we have been able to put the movement as a whole "in perspective", as historians like to say, and no one may doubt that something permanent has been effected in the way we look at works of art. We may not be entirely pleased with the advanced works produced in our time, but they are with us to stay. If it is foolish to deplore a movement that gave us *Guernica and Ulysses*, it is yet more foolish to suppose that we might have done better to indulge pious sentiments on behalf of old-fashioned realism in literature or harmonic limitation in music. One needn't be a determinist to argue that what happened had to happen, and that the avant-garde was a movement as open to talent and intelligence as earlier movements had been.

More and more, in recent years, artists and critics have come to identify Marcel Duchamp as the true exemplar of the avant-garde. Though the movement may be said to have produced greater artists, none of these would seem to have promoted so peculiar and elusive a sense of his calling as Duchamp. Nor has Duchamp, like most of the others, cluttered the scene with a great variety of works requiring some discrimination of better from best. With but a few "major" works to his credit, Duchamp invites us to treat his project as an idea whose validity may be considered apart from its capacity to generate masterpieces. To the extent that we can take Duchamp seriously without believing that he is himself a great creative genius, we testify to the power of his example. Though nothing he invented may move us, his works remain interesting and, at some level, stimulating. They inspire contemplation—not of particular objects, but of what we have come to expect in our transactions with works of art. A Duchamp invention is immediately "historical" in the sense that it is patently a theoretical gesture without significant power to pass beyond its status as idea. In drawing attention to what it is not, and to the reasons for its failure to be satisfying in itself, it quickly assumes the status of a phenomenon rather than an object. Though camp-followers of various sorts may like to think of Duchamp as a free spirit and a marvellous inventor, he is more properly regarded as an intellectual presence, a critical force.

It is no secret that Duchamp's fundamental contribution has been critical rather than imaginative. His central work, *The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors, Even* (also called *The Large Glass*), is meant to be "read" with the assistance of an accompanying text-manual entitled *The Green Box*. Nor is the manual to be regarded as essentially distinct from or inferior to the work it explains. In the commentaries of Octavio Paz and of other writers committed to Duchamp's work, the text seems at least as important as *The Large Glass* itself, and little attempt is made to think about the object independent of the affirmations Duchamp wishes it to make. To compare Duchamp's work with a modernist work like *The Waste Land* is to see at once how little Duchamp's productions conform to expected patterns. Eliot's poem may rely in part on the apparatus of notes and references he attached to it, but the poem has a life and a presence of its own. It is not itself merely a reference to a range of ideas beyond its compass but an object with depths and a variety of competing energy centres. One may justly speak of it as creating tensions which it sustains and into which it draws readers. By contrast, the viewer of a Duchamp glass or assemblage becomes at once an alienated witness, encouraged to move around and outside of the surfaces of the work, to think about it rather than to engage with it in or for itself. To speak of Duchamp as a critical presence is simply to say that he is interested in ideas more than in experiences, that thinking is for him an activity valuable apart from any more total experience it may enable. His *Large Glass* is, as Paz has it, "a machine for producing meanings"; as such, it goes against the grain of the sensuous apprehension we take to be crucial to our experience of works of art.

In fact, Duchamp's work constitutes a deliberate rebellion not only against academicism or realism or romanticism but against the modernist spirit itself. Though the creations of early modernist masters like Stravinsky and Braque and Eliot were deeply intellectual, all were finished works with purposes very different from the production of meanings or the avowal of ideas. One says of the works of such men that they are invariably more than their ideas, that they evoke or make use of meanings without being at all reducible to them. Of *The Large Glass* one says that it means something or it is nothing; that it enforces a particular attitude or position or it is a whim, a gimmick, a tactic without a programme. Duchamp seems important to many people because he suggests by implication what has happened to the modernist experiment, and how it has gone wrong. In his refusal to do what the modernists did, he recommends a strategy of avoidance and a means of spiritual rejuvenation. One may not wish to follow him, but he does certainly enable sharp registration of the recent state of affairs in the arts.

No one is better equipped to discuss this state of affairs than Octavio Paz. His new book on Duchamp, though it collects and extends earlier pieces, is as fresh and provoking as it seemed in previous monographic versions. Picasso discovered how to say "yes" to the age in an astonishing variety of ways; but, Paz argues, it was Duchamp who resisted the age, who taught us how to counter that continuous impulse to change which is the modernist spirit. In this way, by adopting Duchamp as focus and culture-hero, Paz can recommend a view of art which is decidedly antique without having to reject the particular productions of this artist or that. "The art of the last two centuries has borne a common stamp", says Paz; "it has deified aesthetic values, which have been cut off from other values . . . It is against this conception of art that Duchamp rebelled." The rebellion is mounted in a series of works—actually only a handful—which raise indifference to a primary principle. Not the work in itself but the idea that it wishes to transmit is important. By creating objects that seem not to have any of the attributes we value in other aesthetic objects, Duchamp rejects the thing in itself in favour of what is merely hypothetical. "Duchamp devalues art as craft in favour of art as idea", Paz insists again and again. The modern hunger to consume works of art, to possess them or, in turn, to be ravished by them, is challenged by an art that refuses to be taken in by the hungry eye or to overpower us with signs of patent creative vitality. Attaching us to what is not, to a virtuality without substantial presence, Duchamp counters the progressive movement which began in the Renaissance and reached its culmination in the modernist period, namely "a transition from *vision* to the *perceptible thing*". Paz understands the consequences of this transition better than any other critic I know, but even he has trouble getting at it in a way that will be at once clarifying and hopeful.

The goal is not, of course, to debunk the art of two or more centuries. The goal must have more to do with indicating what is meant by the term "vision" and how it is possible to reconcile the general charge against modernism with the appreciation of works by the great modernist artists. Duchamp is surely an interesting figure, and Paz has much to say that we cannot ignore; but Duchamp is decidedly less important than the tradition he throws into such bold relief. We describe him as an exemplar of the avant-garde to indicate that he sees himself as perpetually working against the grain. He makes things we are to consider not because they are good but because they are unique—at least in the way they are presented—and provide an occasion to exercise and therefore to strengthen the mind. By contrast, a modernist painting by, say, Paul Klee, puts us in mind of a specifically human content, just as the so-called impersonality of a modernist poet like Eliot is inconceivable as anything but an expression of personal tensions carefully evoked and only tentatively mastered. Such tensions are entirely beside the point for avant-gardists like Duchamp, who have no genuine interest in personal problems or in psychological exploration. Their attachment to art as idea is part of a refusal to be taken in by works that confuse the working out of psychological and expressive tensions with spiritual achievement. Though modernist art may be said to be rigorous and austere in several of its manifestations, it seems to Duchamp and his colleagues too committed to aesthetic sensation to satisfy ultimate demands. The avant-gardist may do all he can to make us laugh at works with serious designs upon us, but his purposes are likely to be "pure" and lofty to a degree not often conceded by casual observers of his whimsically self-deflating inventions.

Paz has his hands full doing justice to Duchamp, whose "purity" and dryness must be made to show by contrast what we ought to miss in the more characteristic art of this century. For Paz, Duchamp is the master of an ironic mode so cunningly deployed that it subverts at once the aesthetic predilections of hopeful observers and the merely negative or satiric appetites of disaffiliated sceptics. If the modernist work appeals to us as an incarnation of some drive to achieve an end that yet remains in doubt, the avant-gardist work may be said to deny genuine ends and the prospect of satisfactory incarnations. In Paz's terms, such works "distill criticism of themselves". They invoke possible meanings only to destroy them. They are visionary in the sense that they detach us from relation with works that celebrate themselves and the acts of creative imagination that bring them into being. A master-work by Duchamp is, according to Paz, "an open space that provokes new interpretations and evokes, in its incomplete state, the void on which the work depends. This void is *the absence of the Idea*". In provoking us to entertain a variety of "lower case" ideas, the work bears witness to the absence of an organizing principle or myth that might properly validate our exertions. What emerges from encounter with the perpetually ironizing artifact is the conviction that we have but a single idea we can bear to hold or share: the idea of Criticism, an idea that seems particularly thin and unstable as it functions in the avant-gardist invention. Duchamp so appeals to Paz because he refuses to believe in anything he can see and insists ever so playfully that there must be something even he can't manage to mock. It may require charity to "read" the avant-gardist enterprise in this way—as a visionary project without a discernible spiritual object or centre—but the reading does effectively suggest how desperate we've become for alternatives to the modernist theory of art.

Perhaps we can say more clearly what is at stake in Paz's defence of the avant-garde by remembering that Duchamp really made his mark as the "creator" of ready-mades. His painting of the *Nude Descending*

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A Staircase, shown in New York in 1913, did not go unremarked, but the ready-mades may be said to have made a statement about the condition of art that was peculiarly telling. By presenting anonymous objects as works of art, Duchamp initiated the critique of value and of aesthetic taste which continues to inform much of the "higher" criticism of the visual arts today. Though more than one admirer has spoken of the graceful lines of Duchamp's urinals and of the chaste symmetries of his bottle racks, Paz is surely closer to Duchamp's intentions when he argues that "good taste is no less harmful than bad" and that "there is no essential difference between them". Duchamp did not want his ready-mades to be studied and "appreciated" in a way that would make possible observations about their charm or grace or symmetry. He wanted to show that anything at all could be made to seem acceptable if it became familiar enough, and that modern art could be useful only *if it* refused to appeal to values or to constitute a value in itself. The ready-mades were to be seen as critical gestures, expressions of an ironic disdain. For Paz they signify the artist's freedom from conventions of value, craftsmanship and inspiration.

The notion that the artist is at his best a free man and that the works to which he puts his name are expressions of his freedom is bound to seem confusing to anyone who takes seriously the visionary dimension of the avant-garde. American critics, like the late Harold Rosenberg, could speak persuasively of the artist's freedom because they thought him to be genuinely creative and to be rightly involved in expressing his own eccentric view of things. Though the painter might, as in the case of Jackson Pollock, struggle to achieve "a state of grace" rather than a polished or pleasing surface, he was free in the sense that he could intensify in his own way the relation developing between his expressive impulses and the requirements of his canvas. Rosenberg's free artist operates in relation to something he can see, which he knows himself to have had a hand in bringing to life. Paz also wants the artist to be free, though what he makes has no value in itself, and is in fact nothing but "a medium, a cable for the transmission of ideas and emotions". Duchamp is not, for Paz, the man who has a rich inner world which he works to shape or externalize. He is not, in that sense, free to share with us something that belongs peculiarly to him and is a function of his temperament. He invents "works in search of a meaning" that he cannot locate or embody through any operation of his own craft. If he is free, he is free only to wait and to witness the palpable insufficiency of his own project. Paz's formulations might be more acceptable if he described Duchamp as free only in the negative sense: free from anxiety about the status of his works, free from the temptation to express himself or to direct attention to his "genius".

Duchamp's ready-mades are indifferent objects, to be sure, and they appeal neither to good taste nor to bad. Why they should seem on this account rigorous and chastening it is not easy to see. For what exactly do they criticize? They function in a universe of discourse that necessarily excludes those who care only for old-fashioned novels or academic painting. In so far as they can have anything rigorous to say they must address other artists, must stand in ironic relation with other emerging and more energetic works. Can it be said that these other artists have need of an embodied critical irony, or that their creations are somehow chastened by being forced into tacit relation with resolutely indifferent objects? Artists like Braque and Mallarmé were already involved in the critique of aesthetic value when Duchamp emerged. But their works, in moving *through* gestural negation to a new affirmation of created value were rigorous and provoking in a degree far exceeding Duchamp's. Criticism may be the only "upper-case" Idea we trust, but it can hardly claim to be rigorous when it is programmed to say nothing but "no" and to pretend there is no possibility it may wish to change its mind.

The avant-gardist work as medium is important to us only so far as it can be made to channel creative energies which are otherwise misdirected. According to Paz, the ready-mades succeed because they explode in the headlong rush into even more inventive "solutions"

and ever more exciting evocations —"no", that is, to high modernist art. Because they are more or less unitary objects without discernible intrinsic tensions they may be described as inert, and though Paz may object, he does consider Duchamp's later complex inventions more promising. This is hopeful, for *The Large Glass* does at least open up a plausible discourse about the relations among its parts and about the nature of its own potential meaning. The ready-made has no intrinsic energy-centre and invites no aesthetic reflection. Its meaning is entirely extrinsic, in the sense that it invites no collaborative reading of its dynamics; its immobility and muteness may provoke a response, but the response remains always external to the work. Even the amused observer is an alienated witness who prefers feeling superior to feeling involved. This is not an aesthetic preference but a cultural attitude entirely subject to the vicissitudes of fashion. *The Large Glass* is a more promising enterprise in enforcing a more challenging relation to its objectives and in mobilizing interpretative energies which have, quite clearly, a difficult work to accomplish.

Paz's book on Duchamp is an interpretative commentary, an analysis of *The Large Glass* and of *Etant donnés*, an assemblage housed along with most of the artist's works in the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The first *is* described as "a double glass, 109¼ inches high and 69¼ long, painted in oil and divided horizontally into two identical parts by a double lead wire". Its forms are further described—by the critic William Rubin—as a series of cold mechanical figures drafted with puzzling exactitude.

> A spectator unfamiliar with Duchamp's iconography would not immediately divine that he was in the presence of "a mechanistic and cynical interpretation of the phenomena of love" (Breton) but would respond to it only as a perspective study for some strange and humorous machine of indeterminate purpose. He would note that although the parts are connected mechanically, they are anti-sequential and unexpected in their various individual identities. A water-wheel, chocolate grinder, cloud, and what appear to be dry cleaners' blocking and pressing forms seem to function together like a very serious and carefully engineered counterpart of a Rube Goldberg apparatus....

As we look at *The Large Glass*, we see reflected in it our own image, which blends with the other images and painted figures. This experience, of seeing in and seeing through, is the bridge between *The Large Glass* and the later assemblage, in many ways so visibly different as to seem unrelated. This culminating work, with the English title *Given: 1. The Waterfall, 2. The Illuminating Gas*, is beautifully evoked by Paz:

> In the far wall, embedded in a brick portal topped by an arch, there is an old wooden door, worm-eaten, patched, and closed by a rough crossbar made of wood and nailed on with heavy spikes. . . . The door sets its material doorness in the visitor's way with a sort of aplomb: dead end. . . . But if the visitor ventures nearer, he finds two small holes at eye level. If he goes even closer and dares to peep, he will see a scene he is not likely to forget. First of all, a brick wall with a slit in it, and through the slit, a wide open space, luminous and seemingly bewitched. Very near the beholder —but also very far away, on the "other side"—a naked girl, stretched on a kind of bed or pyre of branches and leaves, her face almost completely covered by the blonde mass of her hair, her legs open and slightly bent, the pubes strangely smooth in contrast to the abundance of her hair . . . . the hand grasping a small gas lamp made of metal and glass . . . our glance wanders over the landscape: in the background, wooded hills, green and reddish; lower down, a small lake and a light mist on the lake. . . . On the far right, among some rocks, a waterfall catches the light. Stillness: a portion of time held motionless. The immobility of the naked woman and of the landscape contrasts with the movement of the waterfall and the flickering of the lamp. The silence is absolute. All is real and verges on banality; all is unreal and verges—on what?

Paz is an agile interpreter, and he has extraordinary patience. When he finishes with Duchamp one feels that every aspect of the artist's intention has been sympathetically examined. He makes much of Duchamp's eroticism, which is taken to be fully compatible with spiritual aspiration and intellectual sobriety. But he makes nothing of the dismay even a sophisticated viewer is likely to feel as he looks in at the naked girl—might she be a teasing castrato?—on her bed of leaves, or of the fact that few observers will care to read the dimly inscribed erotic rites of *The Large Glass* in the prescribed way. Which is only to say that, after doing his best to evoke the works, Paz retreats from them as rapidly as he can. Content to treat them as ideas—the bride is once called "the copy of a copy of the Idea"—he works feverishly to unearth meanings which are thought to constitute their only reason for being. The meanings are said to be *virtually* present, each work the "projection" of an unknown to which ordinary creative gestures are unequal. The viewer will feel more eagerly involved than he did in the ready-mades, but he is likely still to feel that his central relation is to be with something he can neither see nor imagine. The works engage him only if he agrees to think persistently about their intentions, and since he cannot really tell from the works themselves what they intend—they seem if anything only curious and mildly self-satisfied playthings—he will have to dwell on the "philosophy" of a gifted ironist named Duchamp. This may not be what he had in mind, but his works do have a value that is indistinguishable from their rôle in his conceptual project. The project one can appreciate without at all taking a serious interest in the works themselves.

The problems are nicely focused in several of Paz's resonant formulations: 1. "The Bride is a desiring motor that desires herself. . . . This desire, which cannot be reduced to feelings although it originates in them, is but a desire for being." 2. "The goal of art is to penetrate the nature of reality . . . the nature of that reality is hypothetical . . . a point of view." 3. "It is a symbol machine. But these symbols are distended and deformed by irony." 4. ". . . I prefer to call the Waterfall and the Illuminating Gas signs and not symbols. Symbols have lost their meaning by virtue of having so many contradictory meanings. On the other hand signs are less ambitious and more agile: they are not emblems of a 'conception of the world' but movable pieces of a syntax. . . . No symbol has an immutable meaning; the meaning depends on the relation."

Point 1. To describe Duchamp's Bride as desiring anything at all is to suppose that a conceptual apparatus can register its own incompleteness. A desiring "motor" will of course experience desire in a very peculiar way, and Paz is no doubt aware that the words for saying these things are less than precise. There is a sense, though, in which Paz's metaphors cannot work. It is not possible to suppose that an apparatus which has no being can desire anything. And it does not matter that the attributed desire "cannot be reduced to feelings". The desire will have much to do with feelings or it will not be desire. Paz insists on the "desire" because he is uneasy with what he is elsewhere compelled to say of the piece—that it is "a static illustration", for example.

But sheer insistence will not make a static illustration desire what it is not. When we look at *The Large Glass* we do not experience the apparatus as a "desiring motor". It is so obviously "put together" that we cannot but feel that Duchamp has included in it whatever he thought it could accommodate. If, after studying the object, we conclude that for all its shapes and forms it has no capacity to fill us with wonder, that it *is* merely curious, we do not then go on to think of it as desiring what it does not have. Why should we? We may imagine *for* the apparatus what it does not have and cannot make us feel, but that is obviously a very different thing.

The issue, then, is the status or sufficiency of the work itself. Works that have a life of their own may be said to generate within themselves a desire for greater fullness of being. Duchamp's apparatus can have no desire because nothing the artist says about it can bring it to life. Just as we know the difference between an illustration and a painting, so we can distinguish between a diagram of possibility and an enactment. Nor are those distinctions expressions of an arbitrary aesthetic preference determined at the level of taste. Even analytic works, cubist paintings, are enactments of a vision or a mode of vision. So are the machine-abstractions of Léger. Such works have purposes to which they are in part adequate, and their adequacy is largely caught or evidenced in what they appear to be. We experience the adequacy in a way that is inconceivable with any of Duchamp's creations. They witness not a desire for being but the artist's dread of stable purpose and palpable achievement. His aversions may entitle him to some status as a cultural hero, but they do not authenticate his pieces as works of art.

Point 2. A work that refuses to engage the world's familiar objects or to become an object of contemplation—an object with a complete being of its own—cannot be said "to penetrate the nature of reality". The reality aimed at by works of art is always, at last, hypothetical, in the sense that they represent possibilities they can never fully encompass. A painting may penetrate in the degree that it allows itself to take on a variety of expressive burdens to which it wishes to be equal. If it renounces its possibilities at once, if it is inadequate by definition, it will have nothing to penetrate. Since the reality aimed at by works of art must always be an imagined and, in that sense, a created reality, nothing may be penetrated by a work that refuses to imagine a being of its own. This is not a semantic quibble, but a way of recalling essential facts of life any practising artist may fail to acknowledge.

Point 3. Duchamp's irony cannot be its own reason for being. It has to be good for something in order to be good at all. Otherwise it is no better than the cheap sensations produced by any number of modern works which titillate viewers without chastening any of their normal appetites. For Paz, irony is a critical passion. In the great works of modernism it is part of an "aesthetics of surprise". But in Duchamp the irony lacks a crucial dimension: it fails to be "infatuated with the very thing it denies". This critical dimension, elaborated by Paz in his book *Children of the Mire*, ensures that works be presented to us as Duchamp's refuse to be. Paz, strangely, does not miss this dimension in Duchamp. So taken is he with the wit of Duchamp's negations and their visionary promise that the tension characteristically sought in works of art seems not to matter. Paz speaks of the distension and deformation of Duchamp's symbols, but the symbols are self-denying artifacts to begin with. Paz does not see that irony is a hollow gesture when it has no passionate embodiment to work against.

Point 4. Paz is least to be trusted in his discussions of the symbol. Though here and there he is comfortable with the idea of the symbol as its meaning to be denied, elsewhere he grows anxious and wishes to renounce the symbol altogether. To speak of the elements in *Etant donnés* as "movable pieces of a syntax" is to describe them accurately. They are not symbols, any more than the various elements in *The Large Glass*. They wish to mean, and to deny that they mean. But they are not in themselves meanings with which it is possible to make a substantial, that is, an aesthetic, response. The fact that particular elements may suggest "contradictory meanings" has really no importance at all. Genuinely symbolic works may also suggest a variety of meanings, and they are not thereby incapacitated from working towards "a conception of the world". Paz never comes to terms with the real significance of his own insight, namely, that Duchamp produces signs rather than symbols because he doesn't believe in anything at all. He is fundamentally without *serious* visionary ambition, and his works seem merely "agile" when they are not inert because he has not the force of conviction to make them stand for anything he would willingly stand by. It may be that no symbol any longer has "an immutable meaning", but that is not to say that it must fail to *represent* the will towards sufficient meaning which is the mark of spiritual enterprise. For all that many great works of modernist art are involved in ambiguity and paradox, in irony and demystification, they are willing also to reveal the defection of certain meaning from the materials of their discourse. By attempting to create symbols that will serve, knowing that complex strategies must be devised to prevent those very symbols from disavowing their own visionary purposes, modernist artists do combat with their own worst fears. Duchamp would seem to have capitulated prematurely, and to have forfeited the prospect either of creating alternative worlds or of telling us what it feels like to be truly bereft



The title-page from A. Kruchenykh and V. Khlebnikov's Igra v adu *("A Game in Hell") of 1915, which is included in Sotheby's sale of printed books on February 7.*

viewpoint

Edward Norman

In the last century—when so many of the political and constitutional principles upon which the contemporary discussion of public issues in this country rests were first coherently formulated—an enormous amount of time was expended in considering the establishment of religion. Today, it is not a question that is debated in public life. The few attempts which have been made in recent decades to sift the matter have come from within the Church of England, attempts largely preoccupied with the effects upon the church of its continued relationship to a state structure which has found neither the will nor the time to attend to ecclesiastical questions. These attempts, that is to say, were about the efficiency of the church; about the need to adjust the details of its practical autonomy without disturbing greater matters of principle. An institution whose sole claim to formal recognition in the political constitution resides in its duty to witness to the sanction of religious truth at the basis of civil society has acted in reality as an independent entity, entirely free to adopt whatever social or moral attitudes seem most appropriately to represent Christian teachings in their contemporary mode.

That may be a necessary development. Perhaps the secularization of the political order has proceeded to the point at which the state ought not to seek a religious expression of its inner life—if it has an inner life at all. The moral incoherence of present political discourse in this country doubtless has great merit in preserving us all—at least for a time—from the designs of systematic ideology, but it does not form a very attractive basis for an establishment of religion, to say the least. In practice the issue is not faced, either in church or state. To bring it up at all is to exhibit the whole legal position of the Church of England for what it is: an extraordinary anomaly, resting upon ambiguous principles, whose defence can only be highly formalistic.

The time ought to have come for those principles to be discussed—from the point of view not of the church but of the state. The issue is centrally about political theory. It is about the official profession of religious belief by the state. It is, as Archbishop Cosmo Lang said in the House of Lords fifty years ago, whether

> in that inward region of the national life where anything that can be called its unity and character is expressed, there is or is not to be this witness to some ultimate sanction to which the nation looks, some ultimate ideal which it professes.

Debates in the contemporary legislature, however, make it clear that ultimate ideals are rendered in the imprecise rhetoric of secularized liberalism, not in religious terms, however much the bishops and the synods might endeavour to associate the national church with the political and moral objectives of social democracy.

Nor is it to be imagined that this position is a particularly unstable one—that present experience will be seen, in future perspectives, to have been untypical. Everything in the political and social development of the preceding half-century suggests that the secularization of moral value in our society is well established. Why, then, should the state continue to offer its formal support to religious opinion—least of all to merely one of a number of different versions of religious belief?

In the long debate about the relationship of church and state in English constitutional theory it became clear, in the middle years of the last century, that the state preserved its links with the church, in a decently broad fashion, because Christianity was a majority opinion. Parliament had resigned from its previous position: the support of Christianity on the ground of its inherent truth. It could, of course, have been pointed out at the time (and was by some) that few actually went to church, even at the height of the Victorian boom in religion—a phenomenon at first engineered, and then dismantled, by the educated classes. But Parliament leads opinion and does not follow it; it seemed appropriate enough to lead the nominal majority of believers in a continuing public recognition of the religious basis of political authority. And it is likely that even now a large number of people in this country persist in regarding themselves as Christians. The majority principle might still hold. If it does, however, it is certainly by now necessary to ask if the Church of England adequately fulfils its appointed role as witness "to some ultimate sanction to which the nation looks".

The increasing failure of the church to have a moral and social outlook separable from the intelligentsia (who set up the terms of reference within which political society conducts itself) has at first a specious attractiveness: church and state appear to stand together, professing the same principles, espousing the same values. Is not this what Cosmo Lang and others asked for? It is not. For the sanctions are not "ultimate" ones. The church's proximity to the ideals of political society has progressively diluted its own witness to external standards dependent upon a distinctly religious view of human life. Regarding their own political assumptions as *moral* principles, church leaders are unaware of it. Furthermore, men who fall over themselves to declare the need for involving religion with politics are demonstrably the first to deny that they are in fact doing so.

But an examination of the church leaders' "moral" discussions shows how little recognizably religious traditions of interpretation inform their understanding. Where once the divines spoke of the natural laws, in the Christian constructions of Augustine or Aquinas, they speak now of the secular liberal ideals embodied in contemporary "human rights" ideology. The Church of England's statement on human rights, issued by its Board for Social Responsibility in 1977—a document of twenty-two pages—contained only two sentences on this massive body of Christian natural law teaching. Once the church upheld the belief that the state was a divine institution—whether or not it actually professed Christianity. William Temple directed much of his energy to the maintenance of this position. Now the church increasingly assumes that the legitimacy of the state derives solely from the principle of popular sovereignty as expressed within the institutions of liberal democracy or socialist collectivism.

Incredibly, church officials do actually believe that they *are*, in these endeavours, acting as an independent spiritual entity, witnessing to ultimate standards. In the last decade the Church of England's bureaucracy has produced numerous reports advising government on specific issues, and offering "Christian comment" on public questions: they regard these as applications of timeless religious principles. They simply cannot see that their attitudes merely reflect aspects of existing educated opinion —that they are operating from within the closed references of accepted standards. It is this feature which disqualifies the Church of England to act as a national establishment of religion: it lacks a knowledge of the ultimate religious standards which are the central purpose of any constitutional recognition of ecclesiastical corporations. It is also disqualified under the majority principle. For the church leaders who offer these "comments" on current issues are plainly out of touch with the attitudes and prejudices of ordinary believers. In effect, the state is, at the present time, lending the support of its authority to an unrepresentative body of religious officials who echo opinions it could otherwise elicit from a perusal of the quality press. If church leaders themselves were better acquainted with political theory, they would find their own position intolerable.

There used to be some pragmatic considerations involved in the defence of the Establishment. It was contended that state control of ecclesiastical appointments operated to prevent religious parties from tearing one another apart, and to furnish a sort of balance of outlook and ability on the episcopal bench. But that has now all gone. The past decade has seen the creation of full synodical government (resulting, as it has turned out, in a lacklustre assemblage of collapsed hopes), and of effective church control of ecclesiastical appointments (resulting, in the first operation of the new system, in the elevation of a man otherwise well-known for his conviction that Jesus might have been homosexual). Episcopal government of the church has been replaced, not by democratic processes or by more open arrangements, but by a series of committees, many of which are in the hands of permanent officials named from within a small circle of notable mediocrity. Disestablishment would make no difference here. There is no risk that the Church of England will become a "sect" if its formal connection with public life is severed, for it is a class institution, and the ideals and passions of the intelligentsia, which it already simulates with an efficiency not found elsewhere in its structure, are unlikely to disappear because of a change in the constitution.

These observations are not intended as the construction of a case for disestablishment, however, but as the pointer for a need, within the church, to see its present obligations with more precision. The formal disconnection of church and state would not, in prevailing circumstances, achieve very much. The frank acceptance of the secular nature of the state would probably not, anyway, correspond with public sentiment. It would also produce some appalling consequences, if only because the state itself has no clearly defined moral principles with which to replace the existing comfortable anomalies —and the notion of a public debate about a substitute sanction, at the basis of the constitution, conducted in theoretical terms, can only be regarded as a dreadful eventuality.

But a discussion of the issues ought to take place within the church: a discussion in the light of the effect of religious establishment upon the legitimacy of the state. If the church's leaders then decide they do not like their real responsibilities, once they have considered them in theoretical terms, they can always seek disestablishment. And if some on the public side of the question would rather not have an establishment of *religion* either, they can always console themselves with the thought that religion is not exactly the present church's strongest point. Genuine secularists can derive their comfort from the possibility that the Church of England may anyway peter out within the decades to come.

The public arsenal

By John Keegan

BASIL COLLIER:
Arms and the Men
The Arms Trade and Governments
315pp. Hamish Hamilton. £12.50.
0 241 10308 8

Navies and, during the short period that they have existed, air forces have always been capital-intensive institutions. A seaworthy ship, in any society at whatever level of technology, has always represented a large investment. As late as the sixteenth century it was possible to avoid the initial capital cost by hiring ships into state service, in emergency—much of the anti-Armada fleet was procured in that way—but the expedient was never cheap. The trouble the Stuart government had with its richer citizens when it decided to make naval expenses permanent and visible by commuting hiring charges via Ship Money was therefore predictable. By the time that air forces began to lay heavy capital demands on state revenues, taxpayers had become inured to the cost of defence, in which that of aircraft procurement could be easily concealed. But, to the critical eye, the military truth remained discernible. It was the machines of the air as of the sea services which made these viable fighting forces and the money devoted to the purchase and maintenance of machines which was crucial. The pay and keep of their crews was a secondary charge.

Armies present a different economic case. The relative contribution made by men and arms to their fighting value has, until very recently, turned on social variables. In warrior societies, the nature and cost of weapons have always counted for much less than the personal qualities of the men who wielded them and the strength of the bonds which united the warriors in the face of the enemy. The Goths who overcame Valens and the legions at Adrianople were not very much more numerous than the Romans, nor better armed or trained; training, indeed, is a concept which makes only tautological sense in warrior society terms. The Goths were simply desperate and ferocious. Successful warrior societies tend, however, to solidify around a military caste, against which numbers, or superior training or better weapons, do eventually prevail. Such was the fate of the Mamelukes when they met Napoleon and the Mahrattas when they met Wellington. Whatever is then seen to be the key to a caste's downfall—mass, tactics or technology—tends thereafter to become the dominant principle of the victor's military organization. Until the beginning of the twentieth century, it was not usually technology, because the weapons of land warfare evolved too slowly to offer even a determined innovator a reasonable return on his time. Organization and tactics were the key to the first military revolution in the sixteenth century, numbers to the second in the nineteenth.

As a result the manufacture and procurement of arms remained remarkably haphazard until the 1850s. State enterprises co-existed with private arms firms, which were usually at liberty to sell their products where they could, but rarely commanded large markets because of the difficulty of establishing monopolies or achieving economies with what were simple and traditional designs. Arms races and arms scandals were virtually unknown. The Industrial Revolution generated both almost overnight. Navies were the first target of the entrepreneurs. The admiral caste was converted surprisingly quickly to the superiority of steam over sail and then iron over wood, and ironfounders and engineers saw even more quickly how to produce the specialized armour and artillery which would make one fleet the master of another—until it too bought their products. Their rifled cannon had already found a market with the generals, to whom speculative inventors were soon offering even more enticing novelties: smokeless powder, high-explosive shells and machine-guns. That these were double-edged weapons the inventors concealed from the purchasers, who with all the self-delusion of men on the wrong end of a confidence trick bought them without thought of the mutual suicide which would result.

The ensuing tragedy of the First World War may be seen as the result of a collision between the principles of capital and labour-intensivity, suddenly conjoined in armies. But the public outrage which followed was vented on the heads of those who had sold rather than bought. They were not numerous. Krupp, Schneider, Armstrong, Nobel had been as successful at take-over and monopoly as at invention and manufacture. And they had not always been careful about whom they employed or what methods their men used to push their wares. It was widely suspected that Zaharoff, Vickers-Armstrong's chief salesman, was a professional bribe-giver—an impression he certainly enjoyed cultivating—and widely alleged that the companies used bribes to sustain sales, particularly to small countries, when there was no domestic call for their output.

Government control of the arms companies was the fashionable call of reformers in the inter-war years. But governments, even in the democracies, were in exactly the same relationship with the companies as they had been with shipowners in the sixteenth century. Unable to offer them steady business in peacetime, they had to allow a little privateering against time of need. Nevertheless, governments did progressively subordinate arms manufacturers to state supervision during the 1930s, and it is the nature of that involvement which Basil Collier is chiefly concerned to explore. The Second World War generated an unprecedented demand for armaments, of unprecedented complexity, for which the governments had to specify the design just as they had to foot the bill. Although much production remained with or was taken on by private firms, their managers became in effect state employees, the civil servants who dealt with them, commercial purchasing agents. The division of the world since 1945 has formalized that relationship. Britain and France, for example, have both established government sales organizations, which undertake the foreign marketing of domestic arms output, whether of public or private firms, and much armament is now designed with an eye to its exportability. The character of the arms trade is therefore very much as it was in the days of Armstrong and Krupp, with the difference that it is now governments which must bear the criticisms of those who do not like the business.

The principal criticism has always been that those who sell arms have the power to prevent war, by refusing to supply, but do not choose to use it. In practice, this is not particularly true of the supply of the sort of equipment in which big money is made—ships and aeroplanes—because the items are now so expensive that small buyers cannot afford them and even the manufacturing governments are reluctant to face the cost of expending them in action. It is superficially true of the trade in small arms. But even that traffic has never fully come under government control. Production has always lent itself to backyard enterprise—at this moment Russians in Afghanistan are being shot at with home-made Lee-Enfields—and exchange flourishes on the circulation of obsolete stocks long ago dumped by rich states at the end of old wars. The author, however, raises an important point when he discusses the sale of munitions rather than the weapons through which they are fired. Very few countries manufacture even rifle ammunition. There are only two in Africa, Egypt and South Africa, neither of which is a direct party to any of the continent's plethora of small but bloody wars. An ammunition embargo applied blanket-fashion to Africa would bring all to an end fairly quickly. But the current suppliers are not, of course, trading in the African market for the cash, which would be small change even if market prices were charged. They are very probably giving the munitions free in many cases, for reasons of their own, and will continue to do so while it serves their interest. Governments will therefore have to agree on much more than the regulation of arms sales if small wars in poor countries—the most glaring current affront to peace—are to be prevented.

Curtiss Aircraft 1907-1947 by Peter M. Bowers (637pp. Putnam. £16.50. 0 370 10029 8) is a fully documented history of the remarkable pioneering achievements of the American inventor Glenn Curtiss in the fields of civil and military aviation. The book includes chronologically arranged descriptions of Curtiss's aircraft, with a wealth of photographs and technical drawings.

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THE HOGARTH PRESS

commentary

The artists' architect

By Helen Smith

Until recently it would have been unthinkable to hold an exhibition devoted solely to the work of one architect or designer of the Victorian period. The only exceptions were figures like Pugin, Dresser or Morris, generally recognized for their contributions to design theory or to twentieth-century design. Historians have tended to prefer artists with a message about society to "society artists", but the recent move towards examining the rich variety of Victorian design for its own sake is one with real rewards.

The brilliant success of George Aitchison (1825-1910) was closely linked to that of his painter friend Lord Leighton, and in both cases contributed to the negative reaction which followed the end of the Victorian era. Both artists exhibited frequently at the Royal Academy in their lifetime, but while Leighton's paintings have spent most of this century over the stairs of provincial art galleries, Aitchison's lavish and highly coloured decorative schemes have hardly been seen since he selected an exhibition on the occasion of receiving the RIBA Gold Medal in 1898. He then gave them to the RIBA, which is showing them and other work at the Heinz Gallery, 66 Portland Place, London W1, until March 1.

No justification is required for the self-indulgence of this exhibition. Not merely a gifted designer with eclectic taste and an eye for colour, Aitchison was also a pioneer of iron construction, a scholar, academic, eccentric, and very much an artist's architect with many painter friends. His interest in colour amounted almost to an obsession and he wrote frequently on the subject, drawing on his knowledge of the past.

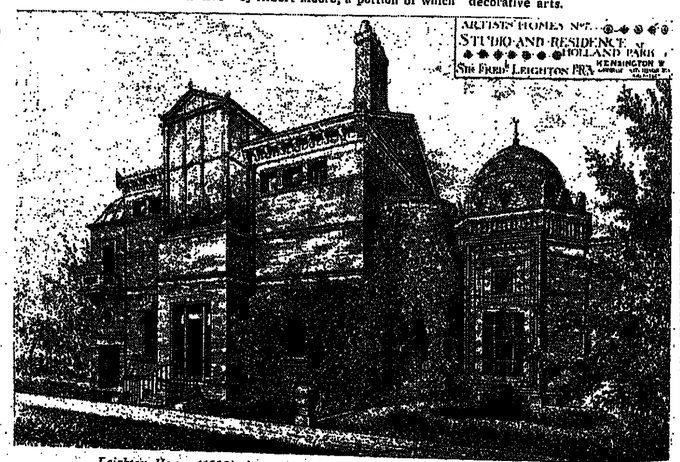
His early career was mainly in the City, following in his father's footsteps as a commercial architect. In 1853 he set off for the Continent where, like so many of Ruskin's generation, he became absorbed by architectural decoration. It was the collaboration of the fine artist in enhancing architecture that was to become a life-long interest, and he wrote in 1888: "All decoration belongs properly to the painter or the sculptor, though it is more often than not done by the architect". He was impressed by buildings such as St Mark's, Venice, with its rich combination of coloured marbles, paintings, mosaic and gold. In Rome he met up with a group of English artists, including Leighton, Poynter, and G. H. Mason, and an architect who shared his interest in coloured decoration, William Burges.

Leighton already cherished ambitions of becoming a mural painter in the classical tradition but had yet to appreciate the difficulties of patronage he would experience. In 1854 Aitchison and Burges made a trip to Assisi to study the cycle of frescoes there by Giotto and others, of which there is a beautifully atmospheric study in the exhibition. And from there to Florence and France, returning home in 1855 armed with the inspiration and visual material for his own schemes and with the meat for learned discourse.

Aitchison's first work of interior decoration, splendidly documented here with the whole cabinet of finished designs, was the house he built in Holland Park Road for Leighton in 1864, now open to the public as Leighton House, and it marked a turning point in his career. Even before the exotic Arab Hall was added in 1877 this house started a new vogue in the sumptuous decoration of artists' homes. Lavishly coloured, it also satisfied an interest in decorative painting by the incorporation of panels by Corot and Delacroix into the ceiling of the drawing room. Much of the decoration has gone but Leighton House is still the best place in London to capture the flavour of fashionable artistic life in the 1870s.

Many of Aitchison's subsequent clients were drawn from Leighton's large circle of cultivated friends: the Wyndhams of Belgrave Square, the Lehmans of Berkeley Square, and Eustace Smith of Prince's Gate. It is these commissions that are the most interesting, since here Aitchison successfully collaborated with other artists in the creation of complete "palaces of art", with furniture designed by himself. At the Wyndhams, he incorporated panels by Leighton and Val Prinsep, and some painting by Mrs Wyndham herself (one of a new breed of amateur lady artists who would increasingly make their impact on the house beautiful). Frederick Lehman's house was exceedingly pretty, with a theme of birds and flowers hand painted everywhere on the walls, with friezes of boughs of blossom by Smallfield (one of Burges's painters) and of peacocks by Albert Moore, a portion of which is on show. The delicacy of effect results from an extremely subtle colour sense: "There is one great rule in interior decoration: that when the eye is half closed there should be but a delicate suffusion of the particular colour we wish to predominate: and in any complete system of decoration we want a small portion, at least of pure white and pure black, as scales by which all other colours and tones may be measured". At Prince's Gate, Aitchison incorporated the work of Thomas Armstrong, Leighton and Walter Crane, again continuing the Neo-Classical theme.

Aitchison was not the only architect-decorator in search of a style of decorative painting compatible with his own work: it was a tendency which had been in slow gestation since the Gothic revival. Others may have been more rigorous in their application of principles of stylistic integrity but, as this worthwhile exhibition helps to make clear, he succeeded where many others failed, in making real bridges between the two professions of architect and fine artist. These bridges were crucial in the development of the decorative arts.



Leighton House (1886), from the exhibition at the Heinz Gallery discussed here.

From sky-writing to window-displays

By Celina Fox

As a young painter, László Moholy-Nagy said of his work that it felt like throwing a message sealed in a bottle into the sea. It might be decades before someone would find and read it. The bottle has at last been beached at the ICA, mercifully free of the Bauhaus flotsam that has on previous visits to these shores threatened to submerge it. And so the fleeting impression of his influence in England gleaned from the recent Thirties show can now be examined at greater length. This exhibition surveys comprehensively yet succinctly the variety of his work in painting, photography, film and theatre, typography and advertising design, all mounted on striking new-framed panels built to his own 1929 specification.

Moholy-Nagy rejoiced wholeheartedly and apparently without foreboding in the modern world. He sought for a universal vocabulary of art based on simple geometrical unities using twentieth-century industrial materials and processes. His obsessions were those of space in painting, best comprehended by means of light, and the problem of conveying movement in space. His early paintings use the industrial imagery of pulleys and levers, with shapes welling one another to give an illusion of space.

The surprisingly pretty results, as seen in the show, seem almost at odds with his professed belief in an impersonal, neutral new vision and scientifically objective optical principles. Indeed, his return to painting at intervals throughout his career appears almost furtive. The broken-up textures of his later paintings contrast with his earlier efforts to eliminate the literary reference and personal brushstroke, in the belief that they hampered the cultural potential of mass-consumption. At least in his Bauhaus years, his confidence in the supremacy of photography over traditional painting depressed even Klee and Feininger.

Moholy-Nagy sought to explore the full potential of technological invention. His own Leica camera, that beacon of the modern movement, is here on display together with images taken from unfamiliar angles or revealing the play of light and shadow to make space. He magnified a subject out of recognition or saw through it with X-rays. By 1930, using the skill of the Bauhaus metal workshops, he had created a "light prop" machine: a modernist whirligig revolving so that sections of space are cut out by a network of aluminium perforated discs and rods. As it rotates, now fitted with one of the original light projections, pleasing cool and soft colours fade into one another. No cocktail bar for bored singles should be without one.

His preoccupation with light and space evolved logically from the modern urban vision. "Dynamic of the Metropolis", a film he prepared in 1921-22, already indicated his predilection for the bright lights, vistas and tempo of the city. He loved its night life, mass transport and entertainment. He envisaged the further development of electric advertising, light displays, sky-writing and projections on to clouds. On street level as a designer, he believed it necessary to come to terms with the moving eye. His shop-window displays reiterated their theme of silk bobbins or table cloths, or the stuffed shirts and suits for Simpson's of Piccadilly, lined up like a headless chorus-line.

Following Gropius to England in 1935, Moholy-Nagy was greeted by the warmth, or at least Breuer chair familiarity, of Lawn Road with its congenial company. Commissions swiftly followed from predictably sympathetic patrons: London Transport and Imperial Airways. Simpson's in its smart new building and of course Isokon. There were also three unexpectedly lyrical books of photographs on Eton, Oxford, and London markets. Even so, one Eton boy bends over a machine and the punts line up together—framed and reframed by their photographer, as the multiple shots on display show, with immense care. He nearly lost his feet to an irate lion woken by the floodlighting for his film on the new architecture of the zoo. The Billingsgate fishmongers hurled chunks of ice at him when he tried to photograph them. But England's hostile climate was perhaps on a larger scale. Despite his friends in Hampstead, his snaps of Bexhill and the penguin pool, England was, he realized, too conservative to accept his innovative ars and educational projects. Chicago at least enabled him to create his own school of design and the Parkway Sketch Classes, their coarser mutations—art-school foundation courses and the felt-tip pen—form a fitting legacy to a question he is unfortunately not here to answer.

It is with great sadness that we record the death, on January 3, of the critic and poet C. S. Fraser, a valued contributor to the TLS over many years and for a time its Poetry Editor. Born in Glasgow in 1915, Fraser was associated in the early days of his career with the "Neo-Apocalyptic" poets. From 1945-53 he made his living as a freelance writer and it was in these years—both as a poetry reviewer and as organizer of the famous poetry readings in his Chelsea home—that his influence was strongest. Since 1958 he had been lecturing at Leicester University. His critical books included the invaluable *The Modern Writer and His World*, but he will be remembered above all for his sturdy encouragement of young writers.

commentary

Hollywood and the cross-channel movie war

By S. S. Prawer

For film-buffs without video-recorders Tuesday night is frustration night. At the very hour at which the BBC has chosen to screen some of the most highly praised films of the 1970s that have failed to achieve general distribution (including the Merchant-Ivory-Jhabvala *Roseland* and Phillip Noyce's *Newsfront*), Thames Television is sending out its thirteen-part celebration of the American silent film, entitled *Hollywood*. The writing, direction and production of *Hollywood* are credited to David Gill and Kevin Brownlow—and the mere sight of this last name will have been, for most of us, an incitement to switch to ITV. To Brownlow we owe not only two of the books that no devotee of the early film can do without (*The Parade's Gone By* and *The War, the West, and the Wilderness*) but also two distinguished films which convincingly marry documentation, historical reconstruction, and imaginative projection: *It Happened Here* (1964) and *Winstanley* (1975). Those who chose to watch the first instalment of *Hollywood* rather than *Roseland* on Tuesday, January 8, will not have been disappointed.



Erich von Stroheim at the beginning of the shooting of Greed, *and (below) Clara Bow; stills from Thames Television's* Hollywood *series, the first episode of which is discussed here.*



The series begins, rightly, with one of the best known sequences in film history: Al Jolson telling his audience that they "ain't heard nothin' yet" before launching into his egregious "Toot-toot-tootsie". This is intercut with various unnamed speakers—among whom I recognized Adela Rogers St John and (I think) Cedric Belfrage—opining that the coming of sound celebrated by *The Jazz Singer* was far from being an unmixed blessing: that it could even be called a disaster because it destroyed the first truly international language mankind had evolved since the Tower of Babel. What this language looked like the programme then suggests by means of a brief montage of clips from films starring Chaplin, Garbo, Pola Negri and others, followed by images of the place where these dialects of the universal language were developed: Hollywood, California, at various stages of its evolution. Only after that does the main title of this instalment—*Hollywood: Pioneers*—go up, to be followed by a more leisurely look at the ground the pre-credits sequence has so rapidly traversed.

What succeeds the titles deserves to be studied by all makers of television documentaries as a model of its kind. Juxtapositions of tellingly selected excerpts from interviews with those who helped to make early Hollywood what it was; restrained use of a narrator (James Mason at his self-effacing best, heard but never seen) along with contemporary witnesses, whose opinions supplement and "place" one another; a convincing sequence of demonstration and argument, which leads from a shuddering look at the travestied form in which most of us experience silent films nowadays, to Lillian Gish's tribute to moving images as unique revealers of human minds and hearts, a tribute fully justified by what has gone before—all these show that we are watching the work of men who are not only knowledgeable and sensitive historians and collectors, but who are also masters of that television medium which necessarily owes a profound debt to the art of the film which *Hollywood* has set itself to chronicle.

And what a celebration this chronicle turns out to be! By the use of sophisticated new processes, the jerky quality of most projections of silent films has given way to a natural-seeming motion which enables the modern viewer to appreciate, for the first time, the effectiveness of acting and direction even in a hackneyed "rescue-of-child-from-burning-building" sequence. Cross-cutting from firefighters to blaze, from crowd to individual, from terrified mother to clambering child, to approaching rescuer; changing point of view and alternating long-shot, medium-shot and close-up is always meaningful ways; subtly altering rhythm and compo—all these, made fully visible in a pellucid print, demonstrate how imaginative a use even a routine production of 1922 could make of the language that Griffith and other masters had developed. A context is being established within which the work of the early masters has to be seen.

There are other contexts too, which Gill, Brownlow and their team go on to establish with equal sureness of touch. Interviews with King Vidor, Gaylord Carter and Chauncey Haines, aired by musical examples on Carl Davis's sound-track, demonstrate how far the "silent" film was, in fact, from being screened in silence. Stills and brief documentary sequences bring before us the evolution of the settings in which the early products of the film-industry were exhibited, taking us from the penny-arcade to the gorgeous picture-palace with its army of ushers drilled to make the customer feel (as one of the witnesses put it) as though he was "walking into another world". As soon as these words have been spoken, Gill and Brownlow transport us in various regions of that "other world": above the clouds (*Wings*, 1927); onto a Roman galley propelled by 150 slaves pulling away in double-tiered unison to the beating of a drum (*Ben Hur*, 1925); in one of the many interchangeable settings in which Douglas Fairbanks Senior performed his cheerful athletic feats (*The Black Pirate*, 1926); and to an anarchic transformation of 1920s suburbia in which Laurel and Hardy smash up Jimmy Finlayson's house while he shows himself unresponsive to their offer of Christmas trees in mid-summer (*Big Business*, 1929). While watching these scenes we also see and hear the people who helped to make them or were present at the studios when they were being made: A. Arnold Gillespie explains how a ship-ramming sequence was put together; Jackie Coogan reveals the secrets of early "underwater" photography; and Hal Roach conveys the atmosphere in which a film like *Big Business* was made, by interspersing technical details with an anecdote as hilariously liberating as the film itself.

Interviews with Byron Haskin and King Vidor then help to bring the programme to modulate into a more serious mood. They talk about the art rather than the technology of the early movies, describing how their original audiences were seduced to a rapt attention unimaginable by a generation used to having its entertainment laid on like tap-water. This sets the scene for what was for me the high-point of this programme: an excerpt from Victor Sjöström's *The Wind*, in a print of miraculous clarity, which enables us to see Lillian Gish demonstrate once and for all the range of emotions that could be conveyed in a silent film, with the subtlest, least melodramatic means, by a great actress who had gone through the Griffith school. The effect of this electrifying sequence, which needed hardly any intertitles, was heightened rather than diminished by its juxtoposition with a filmed interview given by Lillian Gish in the 1970s, in which—beautiful in a new and different way—she spoke about her experiences while making *The Wind* in the 1920s. Two impressions were powerfully conveyed without any comment from the narrator: (i) that even the muzzier definition of the television screen will allow us to experience directly the artistry of the actors and actresses of the silent cinema if a good, clear copy and projection at the proper speed can be secured; (ii) that the faces of the old can have a beauty of their own, a beauty that need not fear comparison with the glamorous youngor selves which have been so uncannily preserved by that time-machine we call the motion-picture camera.

Before the inevitable "commercial break", Gill and Brownlow felt compelled to introduce one more theme without which their initial presentation of Hollywood could not be deemed complete: the cruelty, the physical hardships and mental stress that went with the glamour and the fun. They do this very skilfully by showing us some of the flood-sequences from Michael Curtiz's *Noah's Ark* (1928) and inter-cutting them with interviews in which Byron Haskin and Dolores Costello speak of the ruthless, often sadistic ways in which directors obtained their effects. Their tales of "mud, blood and flood" are then thrown into relief by familiar shots showing the favoured stars of the silent era—from Gloria Swanson to the young Gary Cooper—arriving at premières amid the jubilation of their fans.

Gill and Brownlow are taking their audience on a voyage of exploration and discovery, not a nostalgia-trip; a voyage which leads us, in the second half of their brilliant opening programme, to re-experience the evolution of projection methods from slot-machines to cinema-screen; to appreciate French and Italian influences (the German and Russian ones will, no doubt, be treated later); to look into a variety of early studios and sample some of their products; to see some famous sequences from Porter's *The Great Train Robbery* and from Bronco Billy Anderson's recollection of his part in them; to see Lois Weber at work as actress and director applying and developing what Griffith had taught; and, finally, to have a first look at the earlier work of Griffith himself, from *Judith of Bethulia* to *Birth of a Nation*.

The treatment of the last-named film, which remains as controversial now as it was when it was first made, shows once again how Gill, Brownlow and their team can rise to an occasion. They leave us in no doubt about the film's pernicious racism, without minimizing its artistic and historical importance. There is no preaching: Griffith (with the help of a fascinating filmed interview of the early 1930s, recently rediscovered), Lillian Gish, Karl Brown, and Anita Loos all put their points of view, usefully "placing" one another: Wagnerian music accompanying the ride-of-the-Ku-Klux-Klan-sequence from *Birth of a Nation* makes, instructively, a necessary historical connection; and the juxtaposition of advertisements for the newly revived KKK with remarkably similar advertisements for Griffith's movie suggests yet another, related point. All this is interspersed with scenes from the film itself; scenes which illustrate its various aspects and are allowed to speak their own language without the intrusion of a moralising narrator. We are led towards an understanding of how Griffith came to hold the views he did; and we can, in the end, distance ourselves from the more pernicious of these while yet admiring the epic grandeur of his classic work.

The book which accompanies the television series (*Hollywood: The*

continued on next page

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
126 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 9SD

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Pioneers, moguls and brats

By David Wilson

KEVIN BROWNLOW:
The War, the West and the Wilderness
602pp. Secker and Warburg. £15
0 436 07111 8

MICHAEL PYE and LYNDA MYLES:
The Movie Brats
273pp. Faber. £5.25
0 571 11383 4

MORRIS BEJA:
Film & Literature
335pp. Longman. £6.25
0 582 28094 X

STEVEN PHILIP KRAMER and JAMES MICHAEL WELSH:
Abel Gance
200pp. Twayne. $10.95
0 8057 9254 6

JEANINE BASINGER:
Anthony Mann
230pp. Twayne. $10.95.
0 8057 9263 5

The film-book publishing boom has receded, after a spate of hagiography with pictures when it seemed that no minor star or lesser director would escape the sanctification of hard covers and glossy photographs. (Did Francis the Talking Mule get a book to himself, or was it just a chapter in some talkative tribute to the films of Donald O'Connor?) In between the frivolous and the fan-directed, a space has been cleared for the occasional serious study. It is not before time; and if the films being discussed are more than thirty years old, time is of the essence. "We are sitting on a celluloid time bomb," says Kevin Brownlow in his introduction to *The War, the West, and the Wilderness*. Nitrate films, which in effect means all those made before about 1950, have a tendency to burst into flames. And despite the efforts of film archives many miles of celluloid have been junked, their owners preferring the risk of critical reproach to that of spontaneous combustion.

Outstanding among books on film published during the last year, Kevin Brownlow's monumental (and handsomely produced) work is both timely and original. His argument is that many films of the silent era, particularly those which were (or purported to be) based on fact, are closer to the historical truth—and therefore of inestimable value to historians—than later and supposedly more "authentic" versions. Over the years, Hollywood came to prefer the legend to the fact; and so pervasive has been the influence of these dream factory creations that the legend has often replaced the fact in the popular consciousness. For generations of filmgoers, the American West has meant John Wayne or John Ford, the romance masking out the actuality. Kevin Brownlow quotes Jack London: "Truth doesn't matter so much, as long as it lives." But as he shows, a sifting of early Westerns offers a serendipity of glimpses into how the West was really won. In those days, the cowboys and the Indians, the lawmen and the outlaws were frequently the genuine article. Buffalo Bill Cody played the lead in a reconstruction of the massacre at Wounded Knee; outlaws turned actors, like Al Jennings and Emmett Dalton, taught the film-makers the right way to rob a bank; and the last great drive of Texas longhorns was staged for the cameras. In 1915 the cowboys at the Essanay studio went on strike for danger money: the genuine cowboys looked superciliously on those *parvenus* who, having hastily donned chaps and Stetsons, flocked to the studio gates in hope of a part.

Mr Brownlow's book celebrates these pioneer film-makers. Here is Jessica Borthwick, a general's daughter who in 1913 had independently filmed the Second Balkan War: "With regard to the future, I shall leave England in June next for the Arctic regions, where I want to start a colony for the cure of consumption and other diseases. . . . Yes, I shall take two or three cameras with me." Historians of the Great War will owe a lasting debt to Mr Brownlow for his meticulous clarification of how the cameramen in the trenches were often obliged to fake their shots: Salisbury Plain more than once stood in for the Somme. Contemporary reviewers were often deceived by these artful reconstructions. The *Bioscope* waxed eloquent about a 1916 film of a Zeppelin raid: "Anon, like some prodigious flying fish it spawns its fiery eggs into the night beneath. . . . The new St George strikes the new aerial dragon. . . . Nothing is left of the vast night-bird but a few grey bones." The film was actually made in a house in Southgate, with a toy Zeppelin, some cotton wool, and a lot of smoke.

The pioneers gave way to the moguls, but what happened when they fell? This is the question confronted by Michael Pye and Lynda Myles in *The Movie Brats*, a lively account of Hollywood's new young Turks and their rise to the power of independence. The first part of the book offers a new slant on the post-war decline of the Hollywood empire. Americans stopped going to the movies, the authors say, not because of the alternative lure of television (the conventional culprit, dubbed "radio's Frankenstein monster" by *Variety*), nor because of the effects of the anti-trust laws which broke the major companies' stranglehold on the cinema circuits, but because of the rise of suburbia. The drift from the cities (or, as a film industry spokesman was later to call it, "the out-movement to non-metros") created the new suburbanites of Middle America, whose leisure patterns were fixed firmly on the home. Television was merely a part of this process, more effect than cause. Economic statistics are marshalled in support of this thesis, and Margaret Mead is invoked to lend her sociological imprimatur. The argument is persuasive; but in the end the authors are perhaps too persuaded by their discovery of suburbia. What happened to cinema audiences in the cities?

Its argument made, the book then zooms in for a close-up survey of six directors, the "movie brats" like Francis Coppola, Martin Scorsese and Steven Spielberg who filled the Hollywood vacuum. They have much in common, in particular a film school training and the kind of cinematic literacy which finds expression in the "quotations" from other film-makers which punctuate their own films. In the new corporate Hollywood, where the old moguls have been replaced by faceless bureaucrats in executive suites (and suits), the directors of *Star Wars* and *Apocalypse Now* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* have carved out a kind of freedom. Michael Pye and Lynda Myles are by no means uncritical of the products of this new freedom. But in a book which is otherwise commendably aware of the social and industrial context of multi-million-dollar film-making they underestimate the tendency of Hollywood godfathers to disinherit their favourite sons. In the film jungle, independence is won with wounds.

Coppola, Lucas, Spielberg and the rest came up through the film schools, and their success has spawned a new generation of American film students anxious to follow them out West. Morris Beja's *Film & Literature* is designed as a textbook for these aspirants. It begins with an unexceptionable but laborious definition of fictional form (a novel is "a long fictitious written narrative in prose") tooled for robots rather than readers with minds of their own and confirming an impression that many American university courses in film or literature or both spoon-feed their students.

Professor Beja's own attitude to cinema is ambiguous. He quotes Nabokov's description of "the communal bath where the hairy and slippery mix in a multiplication of mediocrity", and himself appears to believe the nonsense that ideas are more economically treated in written literature than in film. He does not consider one essential difference between film and literature of which the French surrealists were self-indulgently aware: a film image can more easily be plundered for multiple meanings. To put it another way, it is possible (to the surrealists it was revelatory) to watch a film even if one's view is obscured by a pillar or a hat; but no one would get far with a novel whose pages had, say, a hole in the middle. The most useful section of Professor Beja's primer is a compendium of twenty-five films from *Caligari* to *Death in Venice*, each followed by a series of "topics to think about". Some of these topics are worth thinking about; some perhaps not. This, for instance, of *Death in Venice*: "At least one studio executive urged Visconti to change Tadzio to a girl. Would the resulting obsession have been 'healthier'?"

Finally, the two most interesting titles in a recent crop from the Twayne Theatrical Arts series. *Abel Gance*, Steven Philip Kramer and James Michael Welsh fill a gap in film scholarship with a thorough survey of the career, both as artist and theorist, of this unjustly neglected director. The approach is straightforward, which is right for an introductory study; and the book includes a judicious anthology of Gance's own writings on cinema, most revealingly on his extraordinary, maverick *Napoleon*. Jeanine Basinger's *Anthony Mann* is more ambitious, taking a basically auteurist view of Mann's films but concentrating on the Westerns (*Winchester '73*, *The Far Country*, *Man of the West*) but occasionally wandering into the byways of structuralism. In general it is sane and sensible, provoking rather than attempting to answer questions of style and meaning in mainstream cinema.

Pioneers, edited by Kevin Brownlow and John Kobal. 272pp. Collins 1979. £7.95) provides a useful supplement to it, lavishly illustrated with mostly unfamiliar, well reproduced, frequently beautiful production stills, helpfully glossed by a commentary that ranges from characterizations of actors to technical details about sets and equipment. There are some surprising omissions: we see nothing of the early adventure-serial or the beginnings of the cartoon-film; and some of the authors' comments may provoke disagreement. I would have thought, for instance, that "cynicism" is the last quality anyone would wish to ascribe to Buster Keaton, with his touching mixture of frenetic, hopeful activity and ineradicable sadness. Nor would I have thought that after Robert Sklar's demonstration of the way in which Stroheim's macabre violence and sensuality could be accommodated in formulas that "varied little from de Mille's sentimental conventions" one could ever again speak as unequivocally of his "thrilling disregard for the moral standards of the time" as Brownlow and Kobal do. Such disagreements will not, however, lessen the value of this handsome and informative picture-book, to be kept alongside Richard Griffith's *The Movie Stars* and Griffith-Mayer's *The Movies*, rather than an analytic work like Sklar's *Movie-Made America* or documentations like G. C. Pratt's *Spellbound in Darkness*. The care with which the stills have been chosen and arranged is evident from the opening end-paper of Keaton in the projection-booth of *Sherlock Jr* to the sad closing image of Bessie Love disconsolately clutching a sound-instrument, a telephone, in her *Broadway Melody* of 1929. Who needs Jolson in black-face after that?

While welcoming the book both as a companion to what promises to be an outstanding television series and as a reminder of the related exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum which is due to close at the end of January, one must regret that it contains only tantalizing snippets from the many interviews Brownlow and his team have collected for their series—interviews with actors and actresses, directors, producers, camera-men, art-directors, property-men, editors, stunt-men and stunt-women, musicians, writers, and surviving relatives of various movie-makers. What we clearly need now is a companion-volume to *The Parade's Gone By*, in which these precious interviews can be made available to the historian and the general reader. And beyond this let us hope that the interest generated will be such that television companies will feel encouraged to show us some of the works discussed and illustrated by Gill, Brownlow and their team, not only in representative extracts, but in versions which are as complete as can possibly be managed. If the quality of image-definition, tinting, and projection-speed is maintained at the level reached in the first instalment of the *Hollywood* series, we shall find it less hard to resist whatever delights are dangled before us on other channels—even if these are as tempting as *Roseland* and *Newsfront*.

The fatal destiny

By Stephen Fender

The Long Voyage Home collects four one-act plays from Eugene O'Neill's early Provincetown period: "The Moon of the Caribbees", "Bound East for Cardiff", "In the Zone" and "The Long Voyage Home". Bill Bryden's production, which follows John Ford's title and ordering in his film of 1941, has been revived after less than a year to launch a short O'Neill season at the Cottesloe. *Hughie* and *The Iceman Cometh*, two late plays, for different reasons rarely performed, will follow in late January and early March.

The selection is intelligent. Audiences will be able to compare the dramatic feel not only of early and late O'Neill, but of short, medium and long. (As far as one can judge from the advance publicity, *Iceman* will be done largely uncut.) They may well come to the conclusion that whatever the length of his plays, O'Neill had trouble in scaling subject to format. The long plays seem to chew the same topics—obsessions, fears, uncontrollable appetites, and other testimonies of romantically doomed personalities—over and over, while the one-acts lean portentously towards formal conventions appropriate to a larger dramatic canvas.

As an example, the characters of these four plays, the crew of the S.S. Glencairn, just happen to represent the people of the world; there is a Scot, an Irishman, a Yank, a Russian, a gorblimey Cockney and a rumpin' yimminy Swede. Then there is Smitty, the supranational figure of the poet, both of and not of this community, repulsed by and drawn to humanity in the usual romantic way. All very well for *Moby Dick*, perhaps, but a bit on the grand side for a one-act play. Then again, in "Bound East for Cardiff" Yank is dying. Why? Because he missed his footing on a ladder and fell to the bottom of Number Two Hold. In other words, he had an accident. His conversation while he dies is the usual banal business of opportunities missed and dreams never to be realized. But after he goes to his reward with much heaving of blood, the fog which has plagued the whole voyage to the time of a deep Queen Mary horn (also a bit on the grand side for a 5,000-ton tramp steamer) suddenly lifts. So what kind of thing is Yank's death: a typical moment in a series of realistic events, or a sacrifice foretold in a vegetation myth out of Jessie L. Weston?

I wish I could go to just one play by O'Neill in which the trip-hammer of fate does not fall at the end, or on which just one character could wriggle free of the pin on which he has been stuck for exhibition. In "The Long Voyage Home" Olson, the Swede, wants to return to his family farm after being paid off the Glencairn, but he is shanghaied by the crew of another vessel in what O'Neill's picturesquely vague stage direction describes as "a low dive on the London water front". The Irishman Driscoll knows the tricks they get up to in these parts, and is aware of Olson's weakness for alcohol, but seems powerless to help, even leaving the victim alone for a crucial moment during which he takes his first drink of the evening. What Driscoll *can* do—or rather, what Niall Toibin in the Cottesloe production can do—is sing a lovely Irish ballad. Moments like these are the best O'Neill's doomed characters can manage: ineffective but arresting musical or rhetorical outbursts against the inevitable. In the plays long enough for these verbal excursions to be reiterated, an ironic distance grows between the characters' public and private selves, and by this means O'Neill's later theatre comes to examine the nature of theatricality itself. In the shorter plays they remain isolated moments of rather puzzling beauty.

Problems of scale also bedevil the Cottesloe. It falls somewhere between the fish of the old Traverse in Edinburgh and the fowl of a conventional proscenium theatre. So it is big enough to allow for a setting like Hayden Griffin's magical backdrop for "The Moon of the Caribbees", in which moon and stars rise and fall to the roll of a ship at anchor, but small enough for the gearing of the machinery to be clearly audible at the periphery of the auditorium. The actors seem cramped too. They have to be very circumspect when falling about in drunken stupors, so as to find their allotted resting place on the tiny stage, and one catches glimpses of them sneaking up and down the public stairways to position themselves for their next entrances, like children putting on a show for their parents. Talented actors and an imaginative director deserve a better environment and better raw material to work with, but there is no doubt of their professional skill against the odds.

What links Samuel Palmer with a box of Black Magic? One answer is William Larkins (1901-74), the East End draughtsman credited by Graham Sutherland with bringing Palmer to influential notice in the mid-1920s. Larkins did his best prints—on show at the Whitechapel Gallery until January 31—in that decade, but turned to commercial design when the slump hit the etchings market. He joined J. Walter Thompson in 1932 and designed the famous Black Magic box for them. Its then revolutionary directness echoes the qualities of his simpler prints, though the exhibition gives a good idea of his jackdawish stylistic variety.

Past and present

By Toby Fitton

PAMELA STREET:
Arthur Bryant: Portrait of a Historian
232pp. Collins. £6.95
0 00 216663 1

Pamela Street, who was Sir Arthur Bryant's secretary in the early 1970s, has written a tribute to his work and a study of his methods of working which was published to mark his eightieth birthday in spring 1979. As well as painting an affectionately-drawn portrait of the historian in his study, she has drawn on the countless articles he has written for the "Our Note-book" column of the *Illustrated London News* (which he took over from G. K. Chesterton in 1936) to provide some autobiographical glimpses into the life and writings of a deliberately private individual. His private life rarely intrudes into his work, but one can see from Miss Street's account how a rather unhappy child was stirred by the military ceremonial of his boyhood (his father was a courtier), and how the discovery of the Shakerley papers owned by his wife's family led to *Postman's Horn* and thence to the studies of Pepys and Charles II for which he will long be remembered. And in Sir Arthur's public career, there is a discussion of his pioneering work as principal of the Cambridge School of Arts, Crafts and Technology (now the Cambridge Technical College), and later for the Bonar Law Conservative College at Ashridge, as well as a frank account of his pre-war opinions which put him under an appeaser's cloud at the opening of the war, a position fully redeemed by his timely *English Saga* and the first two volumes of his Napoleonic trilogy published before its close.

No man, they say, is a hero to his valet, but in spite of all the provocations to which a busy author can subject a long-suffering secretary, Miss Street remains convinced of her subject's stature. She writes evocatively of the chaos of his study, the multiple typescripts heavily altered in pursuit of his characteristic literary stylishness, giving the same attention to magazine articles completed in a flurry of activity to meet a deadline as to major books composed at greater leisure. And she can place him, unfamiliarly for most readers, in a rural setting as a breeder of Jersey cattle and an inveterate dog-lover, as well as among the antique furniture, fine country houses, and mellow dining-club conversation which have made their special contribution to the development of so craftsmanlike and so productive a writer of history.

To the Editor

'Cambodia Year Zero'

Sir,—Chomsky is like a bear with a sore ear about Cambodia. His letter (January 4) unites Nixon-like touchiness and abuse with a remarkable *suppressio veri*. He rather unwisely omits all mention of the actual circumstances which led Father Ponchaud to claim that his *Cambodia Year Zero* was "sharply criticized" by Chomsky. He mentions other circumstances, but Ponchaud's footnote makes it quite clear what literary incident he has in mind (the one not mentioned by Chomsky). Chomsky's tirade deals with everything but the one point at issue.

What really happened was this: Ponchaud's original French edition was favourably noticed in the *New York Review of Books*, March 31, 1977. His "carefully authenticated testimony" was described as "by far the best informed report" on the new Cambodia. The reviewer, Jean Lacouture, had previously argued for the victory of the Khmer Rouge. Chomsky then circulated to the reviewer and to some of the press (an act of no ordinary zeal) a number of "corrections" of the review "criticizing, with his admirable sense of exactitude, the accusations directed at the Cambodian regime", as Lacouture put it in his subsequent reply (ibid, May 26, 1977).

Chomsky's "corrections" are not printed. But we do not lack a reputable account of some of the points he raised. Lacouture's reply gives detailed evidence of the issues involved; whether there was an official policy of massacre, whether any figures for deaths can be trusted, whether Thai or United States sources should carry weight, whether it was the United States which really caused famine in Cambodia.

Lacouture, who acknowledged the technical or textual correctness of some of Chomsky's points, and a degree of truth in some others, nevertheless left a picture (a picture to which Chomsky in 1977 did not demur in further letters) of a Chomsky either desperately anxious to avoid changing his mind, or even engaging in special pleading of an able but unrealistic kind in mitigation of the new regime.

Chomsky's "corrections", ostensibly aimed at a hasty reviewer, really raised the question of the true awfulness of Cambodia; rather as some argue, probably correctly, that less than six million Jews died in the holocaust.

If Father Ponchaud relied on Lacouture's picture of Chomsky's views, he was not engaging in "blatant falsehoods" as Chomsky puts it, but simply using reputable documentation in the normal manner. If Lacouture misrepresented Chomsky's criticisms of "the accusations directed at the Cambodian regime" then the fault does not lie with Ponchaud but with Lacouture. Ponchaud's English preface of autumn 1977 simply repeats with acceptable accuracy views reputably attributed to Chomsky a few months before, and not denied by him.

But is not Chomsky having it both ways? He says he has nothing against Ponchaud, and then attacks him. The suggestion of some deep difference of opinion shocks him; but he also hints that the credibility (not accuracy) of this priest will soon be in tatters. He publicly commends the book; he privily circulates "corrections" of a review too close to the spirit of the book (though he now omits this part of the story).

Lacouture's comment on Chomsky's corrections was sensible: that the exact number of people killed in Dachau is not necessarily the most important point about Dachau. It may well emerge that there is much to be said in mitigation of the Pol Pot regime. Its actions may prove to have been much distorted. But there is no sense in Chomsky lambasting Father Ponchaud, a priest, a biblical exegete trained in source criticism, a resident in the country for ten years, a specialist in Khmer language, and a Frenchman (and therefore not always looking over his shoulder at US internal politics). It is only too easy for brilliant minds to pick holes in necessarily fragmentary evidence.

Chomsky's great debating power makes him not Moses come down from the mountain but just one more figure in the political arena, spokesman of a great, powerful, successful, and ideological establishment. But, for all its wearing of conscience on its sleeve, it was not the US anti-genocide lobby which put the Cambodian situation before the world; it was the humble and obscure Father Ponchaud and a few others like him who were linked to no government or party.

JOHN VINCENT.

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Otto Neurath

Sir,—In your number of January 4, in the article by Anthony Quinton, where he reviews G. A. Cohen's *Karl Marx's Theory of History*, I find the following passage: "One of the most colourful of the original logical positivists, Otto Neurath, was a Spartacist when young and remained far to the left".

This can only come from ill-informed sources. Otto Neurath belonged to no political group at all when he was young. He was never a Spartacist. He joined the Social Democratic Party when he was in his mid-thirties. He never became a member of any other party.

May I quote from *Otto Neurath, Empiricism and Sociology*, page 16. Wolfgang Schumann, a contributor to the book, writes: "About this time, perhaps December 1918, I had a long talk with Neurath and urged him to work out a plan for socialization, to join the Social Democratic Party and to propagate his plan. This was a difficult decision for him to take; it meant the end of his career as an independent scholar which had led to a lectureship at Heidelberg University . . .".

Further on (page 19), in Neurath's own report about experiences of socialization in Bavaria, "Spartacus" is mentioned, but with a note of regret: "They [the workers] also took it for granted that 'Spartacus will come' . . . I saw that the constructive forces we tried to bring together were weak compared with the destructive forces which wanted to force a new way but lacked any program."

MARIE NEURATH.

3a Eldon Grove, London NW3 5PS.

E. Powys Mathers

Sir,—I am doing research on the poet and translator E. Powys Mathers, whose best-known work is probably *Black Marigolds*, the rendering of a long, elegiac Sanskrit love poem which was published by Blackwell in 1919, was anthologized by Louis Untermeyer in his *World Poetry in Translation* and subsequently quoted by John Steinbeck in *Cannery Row*.

Mathers produced several collections of translations from Oriental and Arabic texts which were published by the Casanova Society and the Golden Cockerel Press between the wars—in the 1930s and early 1940s he compiled crosswords for *The Observer* under the pen-name "Torquemada".

I shall be most grateful to anyone who can provide, or lead me to, material of any sort relating to this author: documents, letters, manuscripts, etc will be carefully copied and returned immediately with money to cover the outward postage.

MICHAEL DAWSON.

2 West View, Wells Road, Ilkley, West Yorkshire LS29 9JG.

The Letters of Raymond Chandler

Sir,—With the authorization of his estate, I am preparing a collection of Raymond Chandler's letters for publication by the Columbia University Press. I should appreciate hearing from those having letters that might be included in this collection.

FRANK MacSHANE.

404 Dodge, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027.

The Third World

Sir,—What on earth did Michael Howard mean in his review of Henry Kissinger's *The White House Years* (December 21) when he wrote, "The Third World he ignored, and perhaps in a longer historical perspective this will be seen as his gravest weakness"?

How can the foreign policy of the United States possibly relate to an empty abstraction that would pretend to conjoin the world's poorest states with some of the very richest, the largest with the smallest and the weakest with some strong enough to defy the leading power of the "First World"? If one looks for common themes in the whole variegated assemblage one finds only one. Presumably therefore it is to that single thing that the policy of the United States should relate. Unfortunately, the one common theme happens to be entirely intractable in the most specific sense of the term: it is a profound and utterly incurable resentment of the Western industrial democracies.

Were this resentment only a straightforward envy of a higher standard of productivity (not wealth; many in the Third World are now very wealthy indeed, even if not at all productive), then matters would be manageable, at least in theory. Even now the West is being impoverished by OPEC's exactions of more and more goods and services for a diminishing supply of oil, and if we listen to the earnest advice of a good many, we could proceed to de-industrialize on a big scale, shipping complete industries to the Third World.

But unfortunately it is not our higher productivity that is so deeply resented but rather attainments at once less concrete and also more important—at least for the well-fed, and of course it is the well-fed élites who are speaking when we hear the voices of the Third World: I mean of course our greater *cultural* creativity, our decencies of civic conduct and our higher standards of public morality. The élites of the Third World see those qualities as absolute advantages even while we insist over and over that all cultures and all mores are of equal worth in perfect relativism. It is those qualities that they so deeply resent in us because it is those same qualities that they, and only they, are responsible for propagating. Poverty by contrast is a small matter since it creates no agonies for those who are privileged anyway: poverty they can blame on us, by the new foundation myth that explains all as the result of colonial exploitation.

How could Henry Kissinger or anyone else have tried to contend with such feelings? Now, of course, we have the experience of three years of Mr Carter's foreign policy in which the Third World was given much attention, and even deference. What are the results to date? A non-settlement in Rhodesia by our Third Worldists; and then, of course, one embassy lost and two destroyed. I seriously doubt if it would have happened in the bad old days of Henry Kissinger—those Muslim mobs after all show much *Realpolitik* in choosing targets; one notes that the Soviet embassies are in good repair even after Russian tanks replaced an Afghan government without benefit of Muslim clergy. In Henry's day, at least, the United States did not positively *invite* humiliation.

I should add after all this that on almost every other point I found Michael Howard's review enlightening and exceedingly fair-minded, in fact an impressive essay, well worth sustained attention.

EDWARD N. LUTTWAK.

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'The Wild Duck'

Sir,—I am not certain how Michael Meyer would define "adequate" when referring to London productions of *The Wild Duck* (Commentary, January 4) but can he possibly have forgotten Murray Macdonald's production of the play during John Clements's season at the Savile Theatre in 1955? After a quarter of a century I still treasure the memory of the superb Hedvig of Dorothy Tutin. This was possibly the definitive Hedvig of her generation and worthy of being mentioned in the same breath as Peggy Ashcroft's Rebecca West and Hedda Gabler, both of which I was also fortunate enough to see.

The 1955 *Wild Duck* was also notable for an outstanding Old Ekdal from George Relph, and when one remembers that the cast also included Michael Gough, Angela Baddeley and Emlyn Williams (admittedly a rather disappointing Hjalmar Ekdal) with sets and costumes by Laurence Irving, I think it might be said to have been more than merely adequate if not quite in the same class as Michael Benthall's 1948 production.

However, I cannot but agree wholeheartedly with Mr Meyer when he writes that *The Wild Duck* has been long overdue for a London revival. How right he is and what a pity that the National Theatre has failed us on this occasion.

BRUCE COWARD.

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Shakespeare and Sheep

Sir,—While using Kenneth Muir's excellent edition of *King Lear* (The Arden Shakespeare) I came upon his note to the following lines in Act III vi 41-45: "Sleepest or wakest thou, jolly shepherd?/Thy sheep be in the corn;/And for one blast of thy minikin mouth,/Thy sheep shall take no harm."

Mr Muir writes: "it is the corn, not the sheep, which will be harmed". This is incorrect. Sheep have to be introduced gradually to corn or grass each season—if they break into a cornfield and eat for more than a few minutes they swell up and can easily die from it. The cure is to puncture their distended stomachs to let the gases out. It is, therefore, to save his sheep that the shepherd must blow his horn.

HENRY MYERS.

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Among this week's contributors

PAUL BAILEY's new novel *Old Soldiers* will be published in February by Jonathan Cape.

ANITA BROOKNER's biography of Jacques Louis David will be published later this year.

STEPHEN FENDER is a lecturer in American Literature at University College London.

JOHN FULLER's most recent book of poems is *Lies and Secrets*, 1979.

STUART HAMPSHIRE's books include *Thought and Action*, 1959 and *Modern Writers and Other Essays*, 1969.

PAUL JOHNSON's books include *The Off-Shore Islanders*, 1972 and *A History of Christianity*, 1976.

JOHN KEEGAN is the author of *The Face of Battle*, 1976 and the editor of *World Armies*, 1979.

EDNA LONGLEY is a lecturer in English at Queen's University, Belfast.

GEOFFREY MARSHALL is the author of *Constitutional Theory*, 1971.

JANET MORGAN is the editor of Richard Crossman's *Diaries of a Cabinet Minister*, 1975-77.

STELLA MARY NEWTON is the author of *Health, Art and Reason: Dress Reforms in the 19th Century*.

EDWARD NORMAN is the author of *Church and Society in England 1770-1970*, 1976.

S. S. PRAWER is the author of *Karl Marx and World Literature*, 1976. His new book, *Caligari's Children: The Film as Tale of Terror*, is to be published shortly.

G. S. ROUSSEAU has edited *Organic Form: the Life of an Idea*, 1972 and *Goldsmith: the Critical Heritage*, 1974.

HELEN SMITH is a lecturer in the Department of Interior Design at the Middlesex Polytechnic.

JONATHAN SUMPTION is the author of *Pilgrimage*, 1975 and *The Albigensian Crusade*, 1978.

A. J. P. TAYLOR's recent books include *The War Lords*, 1977 and *The Russian War*, 1978.

D. M. THOMAS's collection of translations of Anna Akhmatova's poems, *Way of all the Earth*, was published last year.

Author, Author

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow, and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than Friday, February 8. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers to be opened or, failing that, the most nearly correct—in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries should be addressed to the Editor, The Times Literary Supplement, PO Box No 7, New Printing House Square, Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8EZ, and marked "Author, Author" on the envelope. The solution and result will appear in our issue of February 15.

Competition No 7

1 In the investigation of past events, our curiosity is stimulated by the immediate or indirect reference to ourselves; but in the estimate of honour we should learn to value the gifts of nature above those of fortune; to esteem in our ancestors the qualities that best promote the interests of society; and to pronounce the descendant of a king less truly noble than the offspring of a man of genius, whose writings will instruct or delight the latest posterity. The family of Confucius is, in my opinion, the most illustrious in the world.

2 I was in a dull state of nerves, such as everybody is occasionally liable to; unsusceptible to enjoyment or pleasurable excitement; one of those moods when what is pleasure at other times, becomes insipid or indifferent; the state, I should think, in which converts to Methodism usually are, when smitten by their first "conviction of sin". In this frame of mind it occurred to me to put the question directly to myself: "Suppose that all your objects in life were realized; that all the changes in institutions and opinions which you are looking forward to, could be completely effected at this very instant: would this be a great joy and happiness to you?" And an irrepressible self-consciousness distinctly answered, "No!".

3 This book is the record of a struggle between two temperaments, two consciences and almost two epochs. It ended, as was inevitable, in disruption. Of the two human beings here described, one was born to fly backward, the other could not help being carried forward. There came a time when neither spoke the same language as the other, or encompassed the same hopes, or was fortified by the same desires. But, at least, it is some consolation to the survivor that neither, to the very last hour, ceased to respect the other, or to regard him with a sad indulgence.

Competition No 5

The result of competition No. 5 will appear in our issue of February 1.

CATCHING UP—POETRY

1: The British

By Edna Longley

TED HUGHES: *Remains of Elmet* 125pp. Faber. £7.95. £3.95.

YEHUDA AMICHAI: *Amen*. Translated by the author and Ted Hughes. 110pp. Oxford University Press. £2.75.

YEHUDA AMICHAI: *Time*. Translated by the author and Ted Hughes. 88pp. Oxford University Press. £3.50.

PETER REDGROVE: *The Weddings at Nether Powers and other new poems*. 153pp. Routledge. £2.95.

CHRISTOPHER REID: *Arcadia*. 50pp. Oxford University Press. £2.75.

TERENCE TILLER: *That Singing Mesh*. 47pp. Chatto. £3.

SIMON LOWY: *Melusine & the Nigredo*. 63pp. Carcanet. £2.

FLEUR ADCOCK: *The Inner Harbour*. 55pp. Oxford University Press. £2.75.

JOHN HEWITT: *The Rain Dance*. 50pp. Belfast: Blackstaff Press. £1.95.

DOUGLAS DUNN: *Barbarians* 59pp. Faber. £3.

P. J. KAVANAGH: *Life Before Death*. 48pp. Chatto. £3.

EDWIN BROCK: *The River and the Train*. 63pp. Secker and Warburg. £3.50.

PETER READING: *Fiction*. 54pp. Secker and Warburg. £3.50.

JOHN MOLE: *From The House Opposite*. 66pp. Secker and Warburg. £3.50.

GEORGE SZIRTES: *The Slant Door* 64pp. Secker and Warburg. £3.50.

PETE MORGAN: *The Spring Collection*. 64pp. Secker and Warburg. £3.50.

BRIAN PATTEN: *Grave Gossip*. 56pp. Allen and Unwin. £1.50.

WES MAGEE: *No Man's Land*. 56pp. Belfast: Blackstaff Press. £1.95.

EDWARD MENDELSON (Editor): *W. H. Auden Selected Poems*. 314pp. Faber. £6.50. (Paperback, £3.25.)

RICHARD MURPHY: *Selected Poems*. 63pp. Faber. £1.95.

PADRAIC FIACC: *The Selected Padraic Fiacc*. 69pp. Belfast: Blackstaff Press. £2.75.

JOHN ORMOND, EMYR HUMPHREYS, JOHN TRIPP: *Penguin Modern Poets 27*. 171pp. Penguin. £1.25.

Remains of Elmet, the serial version of "Pennines in April", largely dissipates the "barrellings of strength" which Hughes's earlier poem so memorably concentrated. Written to accompany Fay Godwin's telling photographs, these new Pennine perorations zealously map the geological, archaeological, climatic, ecological and psychic contours of the region. Hughes continually reshuffles his strong cards of rock, stone, bone, outcrop, skyline, light, "Roof-of-the-world-ridge wind/And rain, and rain" to expose the interlocking life-and-death struggle of a landscape and its inhabitants:

A people converting their stony ideas
To woollen weave, thick worsteds, dense fustians
Between their bones and the four trembling quarters.

In the bleak overall perspective of the sequence, only "remains" remain of the evolutionary adventure: glacier, Celt, Ancient Briton, farm, mill-town, all in turn bequeath "crumbling, loose molars/And empty sockets" to the boneyard of the territorial—or Hughesian—imperative.

The concept is admirable (and might be described as the jagged riposte of rock to Heaney's bog), but the bonding of poetry to photography compels a descriptive and relativistic approach, together with strenuous efforts to disguise it. Too much is asked of the epiphanic clinching image: "Her death is a baby-cry on the moor" ("Emily Brontë"), "A graveyard/For homeland", "The Cantor/The rock,/sings", "A sea of bees, meanwhile, mapped by the sun."

Some of these conclusions, as well as many other phrases, put on four-dimensional weight—"the guerrilla patience/Of the soft hill-water", "And the hills walk out on the hills"—but their isolated impact suggests that individual poems are neither dynamic nor absolute. Yet, the compensating urge to make the vision universal, to connect concrete and abstract, spawns repetitions of noun, adjective and verb which clutter rather than unify: "huge scaldings of light", "The huge music/Of sight-lines", "the stone heavings of emptiness", "the jawbone of emptiness", "the long swoon of moorland", "the long/Branch of world". The verbs in particular—tremble, break, stagger, drum, strain, crash, swab, scar, grind—reduce Hughes's familiar vocabulary of elemental conflict to a routine injection of anabolic steroids.

The melodrama of this rocky-horror show works best as the mock-heroics of a cricket poem: "A six! And the ball slammed flat!/And the bat in flinders" (presumably "mock", unless Hughes has rewoven the mantle of Newbolt). When the human dimensions of the sequence emerge from anthropology they take on much more powerfully the lineaments of old men: "The map of their lives, like the chart of an old game,/Lies open below them"; or of two poachers, carrying "the swinging bodies of hares/And snipe robbed of their jewels". So marvellous a poet, the author of the core of complete poems in this collection, should not be paraphrasing himself into "dense fustian" or baring so prodigally the backbone of his art.

Another Hughes, the hardworking promoter of poetry in translation, appears in his introduction to *Amen* by the Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai, and in his advisory role both for this book and for *Time*. If not quite "Yehuda Amichai's own English poems", as Hughes claims, the poems in these two collections do communicate the representative, and not unrelievedly tragic, drama of a Jew who left Germany at the age of twelve to become intimately involved with the contemporary and ancient history of his race; "Writing about his most private love pangs in terms of war, politics, and religion he is inevitably writing about war, politics, and religion in terms of his most private love pangs". "Love Song" bears this out:

Stay with me, I want to be you.
In this burning country
Words have to be shade.

Where Hughes overloads every rift with rock, *The Weddings at Nether Powers* relaxes into a feminine flow that washes over, or into, all it encounters. "I am all blurred, I am warm soapy water;/Hard edges are for dead people", meditates Redgrove in his bath. If nakedness dissolves, uniforms petrify: "A stone butler and a titled stone host", "a parson's leather-jacket marked Holy/Across the shoulders, and Bible on the bum". A postman wisely discards his straitjacket to fish

Where silver creatures stamped with black and gold
Containing messages confined to issues of life and death
Swarmed, wrote and re-wrote themselves, fed, hatched and died
In the green-raftered halls of the water's sorting-office. . . .

Word and life similarly fuse in a reverse telescoping that beautifully links Redgrove's favourite symbols of water and tree: "I open this book with an axe,/The grain pours within like a slice of a waterfall." In turning his book into a running brook, Redgrove is moved by a compulsive Whitmanesque empathy with all forms of life from the minute to the multitudinous. Insects, which can be either, focus the microscopic eye on "The spider's face with its rows of diamond studs", or arrive as "Great flocks of butterflies like wheeling, flexing rainbows". Redgrove's visual and visionary qualities are beyond dispute, though eventually catalogue blurs into catalogue, flowing line into flowing line. Such a sackful of "messages confined to issues of life and death", however interleaved with warmth and humour, can bring on the trivial hunger for a change of subject. His best poems are often his shortest, and this important collection might have twice the impact at half the length.

Christopher Reid's element is air. Ariel lightness of touch makes *Arcadia* like (simile-spinners invite similes) the watch he pictures as

a silver case of fidgety
wheels, rich with activity.

The more than initial coincidences between Reid's style and Craig Raine's have prompted wild surmises about the dawning of a new age of inventiveness in English poetry, to banish finally that "Plain cooking made still plainer by plain cooks", which Auden lampooned. *Arcadia*, a first book by a young poet, can hardly settle the question of whether Renaissance or dandyism or decadence impends, a Donne or a Cowley, the triumph of Imagination or of Fancy; but it certainly dishes up exotic food for thought. Reid's metaphors and metamorphoses brilliantly fracture and reshape the kaleidoscope of perception: "Broad beans out of their bath/come to us wrinkled like finger-ends", a pigeon "pecks for crumbs like a sewing machine"; an orchestra may suffer a sea-change or blow its cover as an opium den; the languages of mathematics and punctuation, "words on stilts, triangle-language,/the hieroglyphs at every service-station", re-write the world. Their "Butcher" poems mark the clear boundary between Reid and Raine. Reid's is an inward "metaphysical joke" culminating in a vision of "flanks of pork/that are strung with ribs like enormous harps" which is an end in itself. Raine's is butch-er, his subject's physical and sexual display supplying an analogue for more extroverted artistic virtuosity ("He duels with himself and woos his women customers"). At times Reid pares his couplets and lines almost to minimalism, the haiku is "Adapted for Home Use". A dozen *Arcadias* might be intolerable, but the loving accuracy of Reid's narrowed (not lowered) sights, allied to a sense of word and structure as well as image, promises deeper penetration in the future.

By aiming deliberately at Elizabethan and Jacobean richness, *That Singing Mesh* and *Melusine & the Nigredo* (pretentious title of the year), fall flat into pastiche. Are we being spoofed by Tiller's notes and Lowy's blurb? Tiller first warns readers about "the densely 'Metaphysical' texture into which disparate and sometimes unexpected patterns of thought are plaited", then depresses us further: "most people no longer expect poetry to be learned". Lowy "pursues his experiments and prepares translations of important neglected texts on some of the subjects these poems illuminate". It is not just that Tiller's vocabulary is caviar to the unlearned (multiplicit, wried, vise, eidolon, balefire, middle-aether, valent), his syntax can be pretty trying as well:

happy enough did all
affections fade in the same season:
how
If weathered stubble yearns for daffodils?

But so Canute-like a performance, and the doomed yet herculean attempt to reconcile Empson with Dylan Thomas, also have their splendours. The title-poem shows that Tiller knows what he's about: "poems were trees of wind-hung prisms, each/bejewelled like a grotto". The majority of Lowy's poems are sonnets, fairly heavily end-stopped and rhymed. A few good lines escape the impenetrable and unilluminating myth—"A simple pun/Petrified the Apostolic succession"—but vatic superciliousness prevails: "Are not all things self-evident?/We all are masters of a craft/Each man the Noah of himself/And God imprisoned in a cell?" ("Opera Rotas").

The Inner Harbour carves out an authentic enclave that does not forget the sea. "Send-off", for instance, condenses desolation into a sentence:

Half an hour before my flight was called
he walked across the airport bar towards me
carrying what was left of our future together: two drinks on a tray.

This undeniable force fragments where Fleur Adcock lets Movement-ish skills tame the "inner" exploration that shapes her most interesting work (Elizabeth Jennings tidies up Sylvia Plath). Adcock would probably and rightly resist the notion of "coming out" as a "woman poet", but "The Soho Hospital for Women" and the poems about love and loneliness show up the relative anonymity of her reflections on time and change, the Larkinesque banality of one "Variation on a Theme of Horace": "But using what we have while we have it/seems, at times, enough or more than enough". An ironic concern with the "due ration of terror" implies certain artistic risks not taken, though "Visited" challenges what other poems settle for—"mouldy faces droning about acceptance"—and almost hooks a "fine mad fish". Texture and protest triumph over statement and acceptance in the magnificent "Ex-Queen among the Astronomers", which possesses the imaginative and female powers it asserts:

her hair
crackles, her eyes are comet-sparks.
She brings the distant briefly close
above his dreamy abstract stare.

An Ulster poet in a more literal sense than some of his juniors in the school, John Hewitt takes his tune from a community, only to return it

as men in country places still have time,
working in some long field, to answer you.

Even his old-fashioned formalities ("Anxious for verse to come with apt release", "the changing vesture which each season wears") seem part of an inheritance. In "Below the Mournes in May" Hewitt envies alien abilities, "the minute, appropriate detail" of the Nature poet but would rather find a "prosody/for/class or property relationships/for the social dialectic,/the stubborn tenure of the small farm". Despite his atheism, he is a natural lay-preacher, translating into poetic terms a youthful desire to be "grand leader of my folk"; just as the humanist and socialist cast of his philosophy derives from the "enlightened" tradition in Ulster Protestantism.

The Rain Dance, however, makes belated amends to "art for art's sake", even if some of the poems about poetry predictably champion "the exact look", lens of "sober thought", against "the riper currency of rhetoric" and an "artificer of chiaroscuro" like Wallace Stevens (Hewitt's Antipodes). But though affirming "With what I made I have been satisfied/as country joiner with a country cart", Hewitt also celebrates poetry as more than a vehicle:

For Poetry bogs quake, sands roar, the moon
races through tides yet, slowly changes shape . . .
the spider settles on Blake's open palm.

The title-poem snaps formal and discursive chains by rejecting the "dusty prayer-wheel", disowning gravitas, and proposing to "begin the Rain Dance". The dance has the same function as Amichai's words of shade. Hewitt adds little direct comment to what he has already written about the "betraying violent city/irremediable home"; but this volume, with its finely mellowed perspectives, goes through the healing motions more for the sake of the tribe than for curious tourists.

Successive collections by Douglas Dunn have revealed mounting impatience with the "fiddle" of poetry, perhaps an anxiety to occupy ground. Hewitt's kind of common ground. *Barbarians* seems locked in violent internal conflict, as if trying to forgive itself for existing. The first section, "Barbarian Pastorals", takes up the satirical cudgels on behalf of those beyond the pale of art, civilization and all such "palavered refinements". Academics, "the dead Imperia", have their art of house and leaf, have their noses rubbed in "scholarship's barley", "rabble-dreams", "rough-cast", "coarse" and ... Several of these narratives and dramatic monologues invert the Renaissance eulogy of great houses and gardens to deplore the exploitation that kept them up. "Gardeners" nearly spite their master without cutting off the fruits of their own labours:

We did not raze this garden that we made
Although we hanged you somewhere in its shade.

"Green thought" may be annihilated here, but Dunn has surely picked soft and well-riddled targets. His real Aunt Sally, however, is the apostasy of working-class or provincial writers who succumb to "couplets dipped/In sherry." The taste of sentimentally inverted snobbery in this dialectic, together with an unevenly maintained distance, thaws the ferocious cool of satire. In the best pastoral a self-taught Scottish student addresses us idiomatically from a fully realized historical situation:

Difficult Latin sticks in my throat
And the scarecrow wears my coat.

This none the less ambitious refusal of old themes gives way to their somewhat weary enumeration in the second half of *Barbarians*. Dunn can write beautifully about urban landscapes, childhood and mortality, but the haunting "Lost Gloves" is one of few winners this time: "Five blue wool-fingers waving in the frost." In such lines Dunn's lyrical gift waves above the various ideological compulsions that threaten to submerge it.

P. J. Kavanagh's *Life Before Death* opts so overwhelmingly for personal reverie as to make barbarism more appealing. The first poem introduces us to the poet meditating in a hilly, windy, leafy landscape. He is solitary, yet domestic:

Inside the breeze a silence like a dome
Is not homely but it is my home.

Kavanagh achieves some moving simplicities of form and feeling, but the emotional and rhythmic wobble of that couplet has many parallels. Sensitivity to nature and people, gratitude for "the joys and satisfactions of life", vainly signal through a muffling monotony of landscape and language. There is much brightness, blackness and whiteness as the routine weather-reports are filed: "the bright/And windy morning", "The evening was bright and clear", "dusky, wind-swept mornings". "Rusty seeds of docks" and "rusty docks" occur in different poems, so do "sky-grey lichen", "lichens paler green than sky" and "lichen hole of green". When Kavanagh ventures into foreign territory it is only to take "Snapshots of New York and Hillsdale, N.Y.", or to mimic feebly the punchy telegraphese of Plath and Hughes: elder "Feigns dead in Winter, none lives better. Chewed by cattle springs up stronger". Elegies for Lowell and Berryman read like caricatures of the abject posture too frequently adopted by English poetry in the face of American genius: "Your words have gaps round, they work, John./You may be glad to hear so, Berryman."

Edwin Brock prunes his pastoral self-communings more precisely but into virtual linguistic and rhythmic nullity. As he walks over East Anglia, stanzas proceed flatly towards revelation:

the noise of summer is beginning,
the boys, the horse and the flowers
are written side by side;
and I go between them, shouting
between them, to hear myself
echo at the end of God's sleeve.

"Is beginning" is dullish, "written side by side" an undeveloped conceit; the repetition of "between them" manufactures impulsion. All the sensitive good will in the world cannot generate the fizz between words which would make us hear the noise and the echo, see the boys, and connect the poet with the scene or God.

Fleur Adcock's timely and clever "Proposal for a Survey" conceives a gadget which would prick out the map of English poetry according to the "intensity" with which each region or town has been sung. The mild effulgence spreading over middle England owes much to Peter Reading, John Mole, George Szirtes, Pete Morgan and Brian Patten. This is the milieu "Where husbands, wives and children interlink/And find a warmth in the arranged embrace" (Szirtes); where "Each year more distantly/they rearrange their shelves,/remembering a book/and where they bought it" (Mole); where youth sneaks out the back-door: "It is chilling to suddenly grasp the very simple fact/that you do not feel as *well* as then,/nor, you may be sure, ever will again" (Reading). The more romantically nomadic personae assumed by Morgan and Patten worry the same problems from a different angle. Patten, "dressed in loneliness and paranoia", rings every name in the book, Morgan in a Spanish hotel remembers "A truth": "*Wise is the poet who stays at home/Where the muse knows his address.*"

All except Szirtes are highly conscious both of being poets and of poetry as an embarrassing incongruity in a context where the poet's role dwindles to giving readings to people "who like art a lot once a year" (Reading). Morgan classifies "The Poet's Deaths" and concludes his first poem: "You will not hear this poem./This happens to most poems". Even Szirtes versifies "The Cosmo Guide To Culture". Embarrassment or a sort of desperate brightness diverts energy into jokey sideshows, into literary games with alphabets and crosswords, or into Reading's Chinese-box conundrums about "Fiction". It may be churlish to complain about good jokes, but when three poems by different poets pre-empt the reviewer, a defensive strategy takes shape. Reading, for example, wraps up his edited press-cuttings by asking

I am all very amusing in my way,
maybe,
(and definitely mordant)
but am I Art?

This question is partly rhetorical (in placing such questions as rhetorical), partly the real question that stays for an answer. Reading's definite mordancy limits him to the lucidly entertaining verse which has almost talked him out of poetry. Mole furnishes his "mortal room" a little more densely, but is only at home in the restricted area of childhood terrors: "A man grows up pretending to grow up". Szirtes, also a painter, stylizes his first collection more ambitiously, receiving a fat dividend in one excellent poem about a picture by L. S. Lowry, "Two Men in a Boat":

it's kisses they bestow
on one another in the yellow light,
like Siamese twins growing out
of each other's skulls. And the boat
will break . . .

Morgan, a genuine original, starts many lively but short-winded hares that can't always bear the weight of the messianic purpose which lurks beneath his deprecations. *The Spring Collection* sprinkles messy italics and arbitrary line-lengths in the wake of a generally too linear structure and syntactical progress. Patten's still simpler A to B procedures, despite engaging touches, confirm the impression that an ear cocked to the poetry-reading becomes deaf to architectonic, as well as over-receptive to processed messages: "I began ignoring the philosophies that wilted at the grave's edge;/the smell of grass became revelation enough."

Wes Magee has links with no special mode or group, having set up as a one-man band who plays all the instruments simultaneously and cacophonously. Confusing activity with action, he jumps from Hughes territory ("Pig Poems" and skull poems) to an All Nite Disco or the dentist. Perhaps pidgin Hughes is after all his real idiom: words like zonks, zings, zapped, grotty, crud, yobs and spewed muscle in on the macho vernacular, and point to a further confusion of force with power.

The *Selected Poems* of the year must be Edward Mendelson's edition of Auden, both essential and overdue as the introduction admirably explains. Any dissatisfaction centres on the slightly excessive bulk (a hundred poems, including all "The Sea and the Mirror", in 304 pages), but the prosing and the lyrical Audens can never be wholly prised apart. "Through the Looking-Glass", that superb plea for loves that dare not speak their name, and "The Truest Poetry is the most Feigning" should have been in. Conversely, Richard Murphy's selection slims down an already slender oeuvre, chiefly preoccupied with Anglo-Irish attenuations. "The Battle of Aughrim" is under-represented, since historical event eases Murphy's technical and other inhibitions. In extreme contrast, Padraic Fiacc imaginatively patrols the streets of contemporary Belfast, unpacking his heart with words:

I am
Womb-wall-barricaded
Bull-dozed down man.

The agony is real if obsessive, the *poète maudit* mask not entirely askew. Fiacc sets some small gems among a good deal of free-verse flailing: "Two wee girls in/Hallo-ween dress / burnt / To death as witches!" The *Penguin Modern Poets* series concludes its business with three Welsh poets: John Ormond, Emyr Humphreys and John Tripp. Such relative homogeneity departs from the more usual and irritating principle of strange bedfellows.

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2: The Americans

By John Fuller

LARRY WOIWODE: *Even Tide*. 84pp. Faber, with Farrar, Straus & Giroux. £4.50.

FRANK BIDART: *The Book of the Body*. 44pp. Faber, with Farrar, Straus & Giroux. £4.50.

SANDRA M. GILBERT: *In the Fourth World*. 69pp. University of Alabama Press. $3.95.

LESLIE ULLMAN: *Natural Histories*. 53pp. Yale University Press. £6.45 (£2.85 paper).

ANN LAUTERBACH: *Many Times, But Then*. 70pp. University of Texas Press. $4.95.

LINDA PASTAN: *Selected Poems*. 80pp. John Murray. £2.95.

MAY SWENSON: *New and Selected Things Taking Place*. 302pp. Little, Brown. $7.95.

JOHN HOLLANDER: *Blue Wine and Other Poems*. 71pp. Johns Hopkins University Press. £2.75.

DONALD HALL: *Kicking the Leaves*. 47pp. Secker and Warburg. £3.50.

PHILIP LEVINE: *Ashes*. 66pp. Atheneum. $4.95.

PHILIP LEVINE: *Seven Years from Somewhere*. 70pp Atheneum. $4.95.

JAMES WRIGHT: *To a Blossoming Pear Tree*. 62pp. Faber, with Farrar, Straus and Giroux. $4.50.

JAMES MERRILL: *Mirabell: Books of Number*. 182pp. Oxford University Press. £3.25.

DONALD FINKEL: *Endurance* and *Going Under*. 65pp and 45pp. Atheneum. $5.95.

LOUIS COXE: *Passage: Selected Poems 1943-1978*. 123pp. University of Missouri Press. $9.50.

Five American Poets (Robert Hass, John Matthias, James McMichael, John Peck, Robert Pinsky). 160pp. Carcanet. £3.25.

JOHN PECK: *The Broken Blockhouse Wall*. 44pp. Carcanet. £2.95.

JOHN MATTHIAS: *Crossing*. 119pp. Anvil Press. £3.25.

ROBERT PINSKY: *An Explanation of America*. 65pp. Carcanet. £2.95.

I opened the first of these books at the contents page and found the following:

Done.
Schemes, lies.
Half-Love.
The Rose.
Both Red and White.
The Rugged Cross Rotting.
The Rude.
Intransigent.
Jokes I made of Myself.

And so on. Interesting-looking poems, you think? Not so interesting? It wasn't the contents page, of course. It was the first poem, and you may correct the punctuation to make sense. Or some sense. It remains typical of Larry Woiwode's self-indulgent drifting manner, though actually skinnier than most of the poems in the book. *Even Tide* reminds us sharply that foreign poetry is foreign, none more so than that which uses our own tongue. Woiwode has published two novels, and one would wish the ordinary decencies of fiction to ballast those posturing love poems: their procedure seems extemporized, their tone narcissistic, their language in particular a sustained non-event. Much of American poetry today in its ordinary daily shape, read as you would buy pounds of onions and carrots, is without the common pleasures of the art, such as music, structure, intelligence. The unrereadable poets are also on blatant ego-trips, which exclude rather than involve the reader. It is like noticing someone picking his nose.

Frank Bidart's *The Book of the Body* makes gestures of fiction, certainly with the données of fiction (a man with an arm-stump, the decline of an anorexic), which in theory seem promising, but the verse on the page plods and lurches in narrative disarray:

Callas is my favorite singer, but
I've only
seen her once—;
I've never forgotten that night . . .
It was in *Tosca*, she had long
before
lost weight, her voice
had been, for years,
deteriorating, half itself . . .

I do not find this prosody fetching. It seems particularly risky when it turns to his bodily horrors, an obsession that can so easily look silly or sensational. Verse like this is too lax a medium for insight and observation, qualities needed as [illegible] but remaining unmastered. Robert Pinsky remarked in his *The Situation of Poetry*: "Verse by definition implies recurrence, if only a recurrence to the left-hand margin". That was said with an air of caution and wistfulness, I think. Some poets, in the old armchairs or squeaking blackboards of their prosiness, haven't even the energy to get back to the left-hand margin, but struggle down the middle of the page.

To turn to a handful of poets who have, by contrast, a clear sense of the required shape of a lyric, and who at best convey a precise and original idea without fuss, is to discover that they are by chance all women. Most dramatic, and perhaps most erratic, is Sandra Gilbert. She relies a lot on dreams for her intuitions of domestic ennui and fright: the apocalypse of the cocktail hour, Heraclitus on Grand Central Station, the dead father with a message. *In the Fourth World* is a mixture of bullseyes and outers, maintaining readability. Leslie Ullman's poems wear their surrealism more elusively, are finer in atmosphere, oblique and intelligent.

The woman at the desk answers the phone
and remembers nothing
She has put her breasts to sleep.
Loose blouse, a rope of pearls,
the cup of hot milk. In the morning
the sheets are scarcely wrinkled.
She dives into the pearls.
All day they rise and fall.

Diverging statements pretending not to be metaphorical can simply seem to end up as nonsense, and the wanner poems in *Natural Histories* are constituted of the weary inconsequentialities of life left inconsequential. But Ullman has a sure hand with mystery, texture, situation.

There is, on the other hand, a superfluity of mystery in Ann Lauterbach's poems, due I think to a heavy reliance on the ad lib. There is no reason why a controlled stream of consciousness should not make its effect, but when it doesn't make an effect there is not very much to say about it. Often she reads as though she is playing a game of Consequences with different parts of her mind. Linda Pastan has shorter sights and surer aim, but a second look at even the best left me feeling that these were closed rather than open structures. Strongly conceived, they are nonetheless weakly constructed, the lines toppling in their randomly pruned thinness:

I slip
out of my skin
each night,
hold it up by the sleeves
to see its shape,
examining the fabric,
noticing
how it has started
to give
at the finely sewn
seams.

The only way to read this kind of thing is quickly, as prose, which reduces the insights to what they are, not what they might become. But Pastan knows that poems must occupy the reader's mind in that act of self-sufficiency that some call entertainment. She communicates. And in this she shares some of the qualities of an older poet, May Swenson, whose 300-page volume in a large-format softcover like a small directory, reminds us that poems are separate and different from each other and may take delight in the infinite possibilities of shape and form. The range and gusto of these "things taking place" are extraordinary, her simplicity and directness somewhat misleading. The poems can, it is true, look playful or decorative. She too easily resorts to calligrammatic tricks, for instance, and the sober Pinsky can be understood when he finds her "Cardinal Ideograms" tedious. But behind the colour, humour and appetite for life lies something valuable. These are much more than successful magazine poems; they add up to a humane way of looking, a marriage of decency, amusement, finely-tuned senses and expressive language which respects the ordinary reader.

Two new books now from other poets I know I enjoy. John Hollander continues to find exhilarating mileage in myth and dream treated by his speculative intelligence with a responsible control. He is adept at teasing out the implications of his subjects without triumph or posture; thought, wherever it may lead, continues to be decently handled. There is perhaps a thin and miscellaneous air about certain sections of the collection, something of a searching out and grateful encouragement of slight subjects (a poem about a new notebook is a tell-tale sign) but the best poems here are very good indeed. More impressive, certainly more unified a collection, is Donald Hall's *Kicking the Leaves*, the fruit of a nostalgic return to the New Hampshire farm of his childhood. There are poems of wit and celebration here, like "Eating the Pig" ("his eyes like X's in a comic strip, when the character gets knocked out") or the elegant and finally elegiac tribute to cheeses:

Liederkranz ebullient, jumping like
a small dog, noisy;
Pont l'Évêque intellectual, and quite
well informed; Emmenthaler
decent and loyal, a little deaf in the
right ear;
and Brie the revealing experience,
instantaneous and profound.

But the predominant tone of the book is of courage and humility before old values. It is the hardest thing to write poems as simple and celebratory as these, full of love and observation of the commonplace, with a civilized appraisal of the shortness of time and of the traditional functions of the large family.

Philip Levine's two books, on the other hand, are without warmth or humour, and they painfully lack the variety of Swenson or Hall. These stumbling, puzzled, weary poems of endurance and tight-lipped wisdom require much patient sympathy from the reader to yield their purity and satisfaction: it is like working a rusty pump in the desert. Levine quarries memory and daily routine in an ungrateful landscape, and the poems convey a sense of the sacred or the arduous painstakingly confronted. The technique is predictably skinny, however, and it is not long before monotony threatens. For poetry of this kind, too, the language lacks final distinction ("breathing darkness"; "pain exploding/in our own skulls"). The calmness, grace and sentiment of James Wright's *To a Blossoming Pear Tree* seem more immediately preferable ("The grapes in a smallish stall are as huge and purple as smoke. I have just eaten one. I have eaten the first fruit of the season, and I am in love") though there is something cloying and even occasionally precious in his wondering love of Italy or animals.

James Merrill's *Mirabell* is the outcome of more evenings at the ouija board with his friend David Jackson, a sequel to "The Book of Ephraim", cloying in a quite different way. In his desire to get everything in, a congenial *way* of getting it in seems out of the question. The result is simply cluttered and garrulous. And there is something deeply unnerving about the hectic spiritualist ambience ("WYSTAN CRASHES THRU/WITH GLAD CRIES"), which somehow, against all Merrill's intentions, never allows anything serious to get a foothold. The circumstances and intentions of the poem are ambitious, a questioning of matter and immortality in which it seems that the physicist Fermi plays the part of Lyell to Merrill's Tennyson, but too much of the poem [illegible]

quirky doggerel that shuts the reader out:

MES ENFANTS NAUGHTY NATURE!
WE MY DEARS
LEARNED IT AT THE BREAST
THE SHEWOLF'S TEAT!
JM: Don't talk that way! Who can compete
With Nature? She's Mind's equal. Not a slave
But mother, sister, bride. I think we're meant
To save that marriage, be the kids who stay
Together for their parents' sake. DJ:
Who wrote "The Broken Home"? No accident!

It cannot be denied that the attempt at a long poem of such sustained mental resourcefulness is a notable one, and Merrill has achieved an intermittently memorable farrago of arcane lore, camp humour, numerology and incidental felicities. It is, however, a work of vastly uncertain tone, and I would not trust its playful vision of metaphysical truth one inch.

Donald Finkel's two long poems cut their message closer to ordinary experience, and are both about the inhospitality of the earth rather than about the unseen world or the eternal verities. The back-to-back format is a trifle silly, since it leads in the exact centre of the volume to identical biographical notes on facing pages, but the notion is to be explained by the complementary parallels of subject and theme, "Endurance" being about Shackleton's Antarctic expedition and "Going Under" about an exploited cave-accident (a real story familiar from Billy Wilder's film *Ace in the Hole*). Finkel's technique (relying on a collage of multiple voices) is vivid, allusive, oblique. There is a good deal of conventional prose for greater ease of narrative urgency, but otherwise the stories proceed satisfactorily in short bursts of lyric and rumination.

Second night out, the small nails
crept from their holes
pools of ice-black water
gathered on the sagging canvas
trickling down where I lay
shivering on the ballast in my sodden bag

a sack of bones atop a sack of stones
and heard, mid the tumult,
the little nails complaining:
Do we build a house for ever?

The upshot is that we are nothing more than a kind of biological rust clinging to the surface of our small planet, and Finkel has little truck with (for example) that bit of Shackleton that cropped up as a version of Emmaus in Eliot's "What the Thunder Said". The dimension of moral conflict explicit in a more conventional narrative such as Louis Coxe's "Middle Passage" (the central exhibit of his *Selected Poems*) is missing. Finkel's characters seem isolated as much by his techniques as by the nature of the adventures they experience. "Middle Passage" is a seventy-page blank verse monologue about slave-trading, and it seems to be written from a different world, by Masefield out of Conrad. But let us agree (if I may put it so crudely) that a readable traditional poem *is* more readable than an unreadable modernist poem. Even if the problem of the long poem has not for us yet been solved.

Three of Carcanet's *Five American Poets* have also published a collection in the last year. (The other two seem less interesting in any case: Hass is orotund, delicate, culturally ostentatious; McMichael is rustic and direct, with some long-winded and prosy autobiography). Of the three that one has the opportunity to consider at greater length, Peck offers the most solitary moods and intuitions. His descriptive talent seems to work fruitfully only in obscure and slightly fastidious modes, and he apears to hold off resolutely from any effects that might be due to personality or tone (and incidentally of the thirty-eight pages of poems in *The Broken Blockhouse Wall*, twenty-one appear in *Five American Poets*, and the latter has better poems of his on the whole in any case). Matthias is bursting with a masterful intelligence, and his poems are crabbed with medieval history and bits and pieces of his family experience. The result is a mite frigid to my ear, nervous and self-protective, full of literary and linguistic tics and word-play. There seems to be something of a straining after cultural presence, an offering of bookish or gnarled privacies to the reader in the manner of Pound/Bunting/David Jones. I find Robert Pinsky the most congenial of the five, occupying a discursive middle ground with urbanity. *An Explanation of America* is perhaps rather less interesting than his earlier work: the air of infinitely calm and insidious rumination riding upon effortlessly digested commonplaces now has an occasionally ponderous air, lapsing too easily into boring prosiness:

America is, as Malcolm X once said,
A prison. And that the world and all its parts
Are also prisons (Chile, the Hunnewell School,
One's own deficient being, each prison after
Its own degree and kind) does not diminish
Anything that he meant about his country.

Pinsky shows off his essayist side in this long poem addressed to his daughter, his skill with the ordinary or with niceties of personal relationships in abeyance for a while. His virtues include the ability to construct a large-scale edifice of meaning and feeling without the need to cast quasi-heroic attitudes. It is this modesty of procedure which allows him, in the centre of the poem, to weigh Brutus, with Horace, political action and retirement, and he does so with a real sense of open options and meditative ease. Pinsky and Hall are the poets in this round-up to whom one will most wish to return: in both is a fine matching of talent and ambition.

3: Poetry in translation

By D. M. Thomas

When I was translating Anna Akhmatova's *Requiem*, I remember struggling to express one of her simplest lines, in which she speaks proudly of having stayed in her country after the Revolution and shared its suffering. Literally the line translates: "I was then with my people." Apart from the metrical problem of her Russian line being a trochaic pentameter, I found there was no adequate way in English of conveying the full weight of what Akhmatova meant by "with my people" ("*s'moyim narodom*"). The Russian word *narod* held a blend of meanings—including vastness, strength, unity, intimacy—which no "appropriate" English word could carry. "People", the closest word, *could* express nationhood and even majesty: "the people have spoken"; and it could express intimacy: "I'll be spending Christmas with my people"; but the meanings did not fuse, as they do in *narod*.

This was only the third line of Akhmatova's great sequence; and I had already encountered three or four similar impossibilities. I was at least luckier than the Czech poet Josef Hora, when he set out to translate Pasternak's collection, *My Sister Life*; for the Czech word for life, *život*, happens to be masculine in gender. My sympathy with him as a fellow-translator is only exceeded by admiration for the stubbornness of languages, their refusal to be obliging, their slyness and secrecy. They hoard their secrets like underground resistance movements, and this, in a sense, is what they are; because unconsciously a people, a *narod*, entrusts to its language the task of preserving a uniqueness which is always under threat. "Each language", wrote Waclaw Lednicki, "represents centuries of tragic efforts on the part of human beings to find an adequate expression for their feelings and thoughts about the universe. Indeed, every great language is a unique mirror of the landscape, of the air, of the sky—of all the natural, and historical, surroundings in which it has developed."

As Orwell foresaw, the modern one-dimensional mind will spare no pains to destroy this enemy, language. For totalitarians and revolutionaries it is even more important to blow up words than to blow up people. This image—the explosion of words—occurs in Yevtushenko's new long poem, *Ivan the Terrible and Ivan the Fool*. The poet employs the metaphor in a passage purporting to describe how words can overthrow tyranny; yet in effect it goes off like a bomb in the poet's face.

And if a word
is stuffed with dynamite,
then there's no revolution
it cannot ignite!

This couplet exemplifies the stylistic crudity and spiritual hollowness of the work. The plot conforms to traditional Soviet self-glorification; Ivan the Fool is the proletariat, taking on and defeating the power of the autocrats. Unlike the simple, foolish, religious Ivan [illegible] of Russian folklore, this proletarian hero is a cipher. Thumping, flaccid rhythms, and rhymes which evoke no tensions nor subtleties, follow inevitably from the propagandist content.

It is sometimes easier for a poet to express his true self, or return to his truth, when visiting a foreign country. After reading Yevtushenko's new poem, for this review, I found it good to re-read his *Safari in Ulster*, one of the best and most moving of poems on the Ulster troubles, a tragic, clear-sighted and balanced view of another country's agony. In very different circumstances, and far more profoundly, his great predecessor, Mandelstam, rediscovered integrity on visiting a strange land.

The story of Mandelstam's *Journey to Armenia* is blackest comedy. Like other talented writers in that period of Soviet history (1930), he was sent off to a remote part of the Union to write a piece celebrating the strides of progress made by the first five-year plan and the collectivization of agriculture. Instead, Mandelstam wrote a concise, complex, elliptical celebration of timelessness. Not the five-year plan, one might say, but the 2,500 year growth of the world since the Hellenistic flowering. He admired the Armenians' "fullness of life", their "inexplicable aversion to any kind of metaphysics", their intimacy with "the world of real things". In contrast with their rooted life, how frightening it was to live in a world consisting only of exclamations and interjections. Mandelstam's prose, as allusive and as charged with daring metaphor as his poetry, provided some kind of mask for the savagery of his indictment of the dreary and evil mechanism of the Soviet system. But it is not surprising that the brave editor who published Mandelstam's piece was sacked, nor that it was later savaged in an unsigned article in *Pravda*.

While he was in Armenia Mandelstam studied its language: "I felt the joy of pronouncing sounds forbidden to Russian lips, secret sounds, outcast, and perhaps, on some deep level, shameful." The Armenian language, he wrote, "cannot be worn out; its boots are stone". This unexplodable stoniness of the Armenian tongue is alluded to, as a source of unconquerable strength, by many of the poets in the *Anthology of Armenian Poetry* translated by Diana Der Hovanessian; perhaps most memorably by Moushegh Ishkhan in the lines: "Always rejuvenated, always old, it lasts/century to century on the path/where every Armenian can find it when he's lost/in the wilderness of his future, or his past." The first state to embrace Christianity, Armenia has experienced crucifixion many times; it has had its holocausts and its diaspora. For that very reason it should not surprise us that its poetry is cherished; nevertheless, the abundance and beauty of Armenian poetry, as revealed in this anthology, came as a revelation to me. There are a few—a very few—books which open up a new [illegible] world, and this for me is one of them. By some miracle, an American-Armenian poet has shown us "the book of her people", from the fourth century to the present, transmuting the originals into an English that is supple and strong, timeless and contemporary. The miracle clearly has an explanation: Diana Der Hovanessian is a brilliant poet (and I say that without having yet read any of her own poems); and also, like all the best translations, her anthology is an act of love.

As one might expect, the notes of lamentation and anger are struck, over and over again, down the centuries. There are also many beautiful love poems and erotic poems. From such abundance it is invidious to quote; but certainly one of the most sensuous and "life-filled" poems I have ever read is Daniel Varoujan's *The Oriental Bath*. Its subject is, simply, women taking a turkish bath; out of it, all of life seems to spring, from the physical, tumultuously presented detail of soaps, ointments, bowls, "curls from armpits/snarls from brushes" to an idealized eroticism reminiscent of the *Song of Songs*. . . . "Let me kiss too the navel where you keep/the hashish of Arabia and the musk of Africa." Varoujan died at thirty-one, murdered by the Turks in the holocaust of 1915. But the Armenian language lives. So does its poetry; and it is here.

In spite of the untranslatable uniqueness of the individual word, poems *can* be translated: since, as the words constellate, a good poet may—with love and luck—find "convocations of words in another language that will have a comparable thrust and sense". This phrase is from W. S. Merwin's illuminating foreword in his *Selected Translations*. Regrettably I found the foreword more interesting than the translations. Mr Merwin's approach is much more inwardly directed than is that of Miss Der Hovanessian and her co-editor; whereas their method was to "rewrite each poem as we imagined the original poet would have written it in English", Mr Merwin appears to add to that definition: "if he or she were W. S. Merwin". There is nothing intrinsically wrong with this approach; but in practice the poems he has chosen to translate, from a wide variety of languages and cultures, meld into one voice—the spare, laconic voice of a white American writing "primitive" poetry. One carries away an impression of form without much content.

The central problem of fidelity to the original is one to which there are no simple answers. Often the most self-consciously "faithful" version is faithless, while the apparently promiscuous can be the most true. Generally, given a good poet as translator, one may say that the greater the love, the greater the fidelity. The love and fidelity shown by Clayton Eshleman and José Rubia Barcia, in their monumental bilingual text of Vallejo's *Complete Posthumous Poetry* are equally remarkable. Spanish and English have a rare magnetic sympathy, by which the former can be turned into a rhetorically effective kind of Spanish-English poetry which closely echoes the original. Mr Eshleman has capitalized on this unique sympathy to produce almost literal versions which work splendidly. Placed side by side with the Spanish text, they enable a reader who knows very little Spanish (like myself) to "hear" the great Peruvian poet in his own tongue. Even for me, it is a small step to go from: "A man is looking at a woman, is looking at her immediately,/with her earth sumptuous sickness . . ." to Vallejo's "Un hombre está mirando a una mujer,/está mirándola inmediatamente,/con su mal de tierra suntuosa. . ." There are copious informative notes, and a turgid introduction. Altogether, though, a handsome and generous book; and, like all the most handsome and generous books reviewed here, American.

From the translations of Miklós Radnóti's *Forced March* I get little impression of how the original might sound. Radnóti, a Hungarian Jew, was executed by a German firing-squad in 1944. When the bodies were exhumed a year later, a notebook full of poems was found in Radnóti's overcoat. Some of the poems in this selection were written within days of his death; I was moved more by that fact than by the poems themselves. It may be that the metre adopted by the translators, the hexameter—with its Georgian overtones—distances us. One prison-camp poem, *The Seventh Eclogue*, gives a tantalizing hint of Radnóti's quality:

only I
Sit up awake—on my lips, instead of your kisses, the taste
Of a half-smoked cigarette; and [illegible] sleep comes bringing rest, for
I can no longer die without you nor can I live . . .

His poetry remained formal, classical and humane, in the midst of the horrors: the polar opposite of Yannis Ritsos's *Scripture of the Blind*, more than a hundred horror-packed poems written in the space of two months, in 1972, during his detention by the Greek Colonels. This is a grotesque and sickening landscape of the gross, the dislocated, the malformed; and the poems take on the inhumanity of the tyrants by whom Ritsos was persecuted.

From these poets of the battleground of the twentieth century [illegible] escape to the tranquillity of the [illegible]

nineteenth century: to Heine's *The Lazarus Poems*, written when he was dying of tertiary syphilis, and to Verlaine's *Femmes/Hombres*, written when he was suffering from cirrhosis, cardiac hypertrophy, syphilitic ulcers, and a few other diseases. Alistair Elliot—no hypochondriac, I trust—has translated them both, in bilingual editions. They provide an interesting lesson on the wayward nature of fidelity. In the Heine, Mr Elliot has been admirably faithful to the metres and rhymes: a partial fidelity which has forced him, often, to be untrue to the poems themselves. Most of the originals are in four-line verses of rhymed tetrameters, a difficult form to achieve in English without sounding frivolous. To describe Lethe as "the classic spa" is clever and witty, and much too contemporary. The flaw lies not in the translator's invention of a phrase but in the fact that Heine could not conceivably have selected it, had he been writing his poem in English.

Yet in Verlaine's clandestine collections of erotic verse, Mr Elliot succeeds marvellously. The French poet's exuberant wit, sensuality, and technical—or pyrotechnical—brilliance evoke the same virtues in the translator. The poems are obscene, blasphemous, joyful celebrations of carnal love, with man or woman; hymns to the body. Here (to echo Mandelstam) are sounds forbidden to polite lips, secret sounds, outcast, shameful; also truthful, hard, impervious to Yevtushenko's "dynamite". And I am, in fact, reminded of Nadezhda Mandelstam's saying that she enjoyed hearing the obscenities of peasant women, because those words were incorruptible. Verlaine's "Un peu de merde et de fromage" (from *Hombres*), which fail to daunt his lust, is rather more meaningful, indeed, than T. S. Eliot's "garlic and sapphires in the mud". These are astonishing, beautiful poems, astonishingly and beautifully rendered. We can be especially grateful for the French text, since only six of the poems appear in the Pléiade Verlaine—an indecent prudishness.

La Fontaine, two centuries earlier, was compelled to repudiate his early indiscretions, the *Contes et Nouvelles*. They had spread too far for him to suppress them altogether, as he said he would wish to have done. If they had vanished, they would not have been a great artistic loss. Whereas *Femmes/Hombres* is true and obscene, *Some Tales* is unreal and smutty; instead of Verlaine's passionate exploration of the flesh, we have mechanical schoolboyish jokes, with winks and nudges, irritating coyness, ("So people tell me, but of course *I* don't know . . ."). The plots are mostly drawn from Boccaccio; and I have searched in vain for the "profound humanity, sympathy and imagination" which C. H. Sisson finds in their narration. The Fables, which we would love to have in a good English version, have not, unfortunately, yielded their secret in James Michie's selections. Here, also, fidelity in the less essential aspects of poetry, such as rhyme, creates a deeper betrayal. To take an example from *The Coach and the Fly*—the plodding reality that underlies the fly's delusions of grandeur is established by the prosaic human detail, and laborious rhythms, of these lines: "Femmes, moine, vieillards, tout était descendu:/L'attelage suait, soufflait, était rendu." But for the sake of a rhyme, Mr Michie has given away this kingdom, replacing it with "Labouring, sweating, out of breath, dead-beat/(The passengers had taken to their feet)", in which the unmentioned monk, ladies and old men positively skip along.

When Elaine Feinstein is the translator, we need not fear that the more important will be sacrificed to the less. With her, we are back in the twentieth-century battleground, and at the front line—the Soviet Union. Two of her *Three Russian Poets* were in close touch with tragedy. Margarita Aliger's lover, Fadneev, who was possibly implicated in Mandelstam's downfall and death, committed suicide after the exposure of Stalinism; and the guilt of being a survivor is a strong theme in Aliger's poetry. Yunna Moritz was lucky to survive, as a child, the Babi Yar massacres; and her husband, a literary critic, committed suicide after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. In the small selection of her work printed here, she is at her best in three moving, simple lyrics about her sick mother. It is with Miss Feinstein's more generous selection from Bella Akhmadulina, however, that she begins to quicken us with the sense of a major voice, as she did so triumphantly with her versions of Tsvetayeva. Her method of translation is disarmingly simple: to follow faithfully the line of thought and image, so strong and vibrant in Akhmadulina, while reining in the emphatic Russian metre to produce the subtler rhythmic effects that are appropriate in contemporary English verse. Two of her best translations are of poems about Tsvetayeva, by whom she is still, clearly, haunted. That is as it should be: again, a matter of love.

And finally—the distillation of one human life, as the Armenian anthology is the distillation of a country's. Czechoslovakia's greatest living poet, Jaroslav Seifert, looks back on his long life—he is seventy-seven—in a freely-drifting sequence of lyric poems. A celebration of love, woman, nature, and his native city Prague, *The Plague Column* is art—in Pasternak's phrase—"meditating upon death, and thereby creating new life". Within a few lines Seifert can startle us with a strange yet truthful metaphor, then strike the heart to stillness with a transparent finality of statement:

Night, that merciless matron of darkness,
hurriedly pours the red dawn from the sky
like the bloody water
in which Monsieur Marat was murdered. . . .
Everything on earth has happened before,
nothing is new,
but woe to the lovers
who fail to discover a fresh blossom
in every future kiss.

In the last poem and testament of the collection, he apologizes for the paucity of the verses he has given to the world; and adds that, if at times they sparkled at all, it was not their light: "I loved this language." It is a love evidently not shared by his political masters, for Seifert—their greatest poet—is not allowed to be published in his own country. This is not because his poems are political statements, but because they are *not* political statements. So the Czech word, too, is forbidden to Czech lips, "secret sounds, outcast, and perhaps, on some deep level, shameful", and hard as a stone.

YEVGENI YEVTUSHENKO: *Ivan the Terrible and Ivan the Fool*. Translated by Daniel Weissbort. 63pp. Victor Gollancz. Paperback. £2.95.

OSIP MANDELSTAM: *Journey to Armenia*. Translated by Sidney Monas; with a critical essay, "Mandelstam and the Journey", by Henry Gifford. 77pp. San Francisco: George F. Ritchie. $32.

Anthology of Armenian Poetry. Translated and edited by Diana Der Hovanessian and Marzbed Margossian. 357pp. Columbia University Press. $25 (paperback, $10).

W. S. MERWIN: *Selected Translations 1968-1978*. 125pp. Atheneum. Paperback. $6.95.

CÉSAR VALLEJO: *The Complete Posthumous Poetry*. Translated by Clayton Eshleman and José Rubia Barcia. 339pp. University of California Press. £14.

MIKLÓS RADNÓTI: *Forced March: Selected Poems*. Translated by Clive Wilmer and George Gömöri. 62pp. Carcanet Press. Paperback. £2.95.

YANNIS RITSOS: *Scripture of the Blind*. Translated by Kimon Friar and Kostas Myrsiades. 251pp. Ohio State University Press. $20.

HEINRICH HEINE: *The Lazarus Poems*. Translated by Alistair Elliot. 79pp. Carcanet Press/MidNAG. £4.25.

PAUL VERLAINE: *Femmes/Hombres*. Translated by Alistair Elliot. 151pp. Anvil Press. £5.95.

LA FONTAINE: *Some Tales*. Translated by C. H. Sisson. 131pp. Carcanet Press. £4.50.

LA FONTAINE: *Selected Fables*. Translated by James Michie. 273pp. Allen Lane. £10.

Three Russian Poets: Aliger, Moritz, Akhmadulina. Translated by Elaine Feinstein. 80pp. Carcanet Press. Paperback. £2.80.

JAROSLAV SEIFERT: *The Plague Column*. Translated by Ewald Osers. Unnumbered pages. Terra Nova Editions. £5.95 (paperback, £4.50).

Human Geography

Hardly believing it, we left each other
in the hot gale of the underground—you
to the time you could not give up, and I
to my family holidays lolling in parched
Ionian heat: olive groves, tortuous roads,
and vodka precisely at six.

I write on the terrace now, reliving it all.
Grandfather sits as he does each day
watching the lazy sea pucker and smooth,
with his eyes vague and his back set
to the island and Europe behind it. 'Ruined',
he says, 'A class and manners unknown to me'.

What he resents is you. And I think of you
changing for sleep two hours away
in that single room, with your bare spine
bowed as you shrug your nightshirt on.
'The war'; he bends towards me again,
amused to discover his life is history;

'Changed it all. To think. The Kaiser, here . . .'
then gestures clumsily over the bay, half drunk
and almost asleep, to show the Achilleon squaring
its massive shadow downhill. Tall lights appear,
CASINO in pink, and car by car the gamblers
gather at tables where soldiers signalled

'Im Westen Nichts Neues' to sentries, changing
the guard on Hohenzollern, moored a mile below.
I picture roulette exactly—a ball flicked
round on the wheel, rested, then thrown once more—
with nothing to say. Grandfather shuffles inside.
The sunset thins to a smear of darkening gold.

Andrew Motion

The role of the Crown

By Geoffrey Marshall

G. H. L. Le MAY:
The Victorian Constitution
243pp. Duckworth. £12.50.
0 7156 1353 7

English constitutional conventions are, as G. H. L. Le May says in *The Victorian Constitution* ("like the procreation of eels"), vague, slippery and mysterious. Precisely how they are generated is somewhat unclear; how they are recognized excites differences of opinion and how they change and disappear is is a matter for dispute.

This excellent and thought-provoking study grapples with the "conventions, usages and contingencies" of British government between the 1830s and the outbreak of the First World War. Five topics are examined: the changing prerogatives of the Crown; the relations between Queen Victoria and her ministers; relations between Cabinet and Prime Minister; the role of the House of Commons; and relations between the two Houses. In all of this the prerogative power and its relation to the advice and responsibility of ministers is perhaps the most interesting since it has received less attention from historians than the growth of party discipline and the struggle between the Lords and Commons.

In the second edition of *The English Constitution*, written in 1872, Walter Bagehot made some play with the things the Queen could "by law do without consulting Parliament". She could disband the army, sell off the navy, make war, create peers and pardon offenders. None of these is a "personal prerogative" (as some have called it) in the sense that it could be exercised without the advice of responsible ministers. In one sense the difference between the law and the constitution is that the major conventional premise of constitutional behaviour is that all the major prerogatives of the Crown are exercised upon—or at least after—the advice of ministers. What is a matter of difficulty even now (and was much more so in 1840) is the degree to which the Sovereign must conventionally heed or be bound by ministerial advice in the various contingencies that require the exercise of prerogative powers.

Victoria, as Mr Le May shows us, never abandoned the claim that she could of her own volition dismiss individual ministers or indeed the whole Cabinet. Nowadays the dismissal of a Cabinet, though recently effected in Australia, would strike most commentators as an ambitious and unthinkable exercise. Nevertheless it was thinkable enough in the Home Rule crisis of 1913 and was consistent with the view that the Crown is not obliged to accept the advice of any one set of ministers provided alternative advisers can be found who can retain the support of a majority in the house of Commons. That possibility and the need to consider it arise more realistically in relation to the Crown's power to refuse a dissolution of Parliament. Such a refusal must, as Lord Aberdeen told Victoria, be "one of the very few acts which the Queen of England could do without responsible advice". The convention or usage, that governs refusal, is still not capable of precise codification. But it was, and has remained, clear that there are circumstances in which the Queen is entitled to entertain the possibility of an alternative government and to reject the advice of an incumbent Prime Minister.

It is perhaps in the relations of the Prime Minister to the Cabinet and of both to the Crown and the House of Commons that the major usages and conventions are encountered. Here there have been undoubted changes, some deliberate, some by accident. Gladstone in the 1880s felt some doubt, for example, about his entitlement to dismiss or require the dismissal of a Cabinet Minister from his office without some substantial reason. Modern Prime Ministers display no such nicety of sentiment and make free with the Queen's prerogative.

One other change in prime ministerial power perhaps connects remotely with the maxims of behaviour drawn up for himself by William IV—which Mr Le May says (*sotto voce*) would have served equally well as maxims for a successful grocer. Among them was the notion that the Sovereign should beware of giving firm pledges on any subject of public policy. It was a version of this axiom which Lord Haldane propounded to George V in 1916 in urging that he should not promise a general election to a potential Prime Minister not yet in office. Unfortunately the maxim was twisted by Bonar Law into the shape of the present novel and unprincipled maxim that Prime Ministers in office are alone and without the concurrence of the Cabinet privileged to advise on the timing of general elections—a doctrine that neither Gladstone nor Asquith would have recognized.

There remains a puzzle about the development of conventions governing the prerogative. Some (as Grant Robertson told George V) are extinguished by time and circumstances. Where relations with the House of Commons are concerned the growth and solidification of the party system is the obvious circumstance in question. But the presence of parties is less obviously relevant to many of the powers that Victoria would have claimed to exercise in relation, say, to foreign affairs, the Church or the army. And what effect has time alone? Can we entirely answer the question implicitly raised by Balfour in 1913 about the existence of infrequently exerted powers when he said "If a prerogative power *ought* rarely to be used, it cannot become obsolete *merely because* it is rarely used"?

With conventions as with language the rules reflect in the end what people do rather than what authoritative persons say they should do. Le May's very readable book shows us both at a crucial period of English constitutional development. It should find a slot in every student's reading list between Bagehot's *English Constitution* and Jennings's *Cabinet Government*.

Stalker & Co

By Janet Morgan

LORD HOME:
Border Reflections
Chiefly on the Arts of Shooting and Fishing
111pp. Collins. £4.95.
0 00 216301 2

JO GRIMOND:
Memoirs
316pp. Heinemann. £7.95.
0 434 30600 2

HAROLD WILSON:
Final Term
The Labour Government 1974-1976
332pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson/Michael Joseph. £8.95.
0 7181 1860 X

Be sure to read these reminiscences in alphabetical order: Home (listed in earlier incarnations under D), Grimond, Wilson. Otherwise you will give up too soon. *Border Reflections*, lucid and un-selfconscious, will vastly interest those who, like Lord Home, enjoy what his publisher describes as "the disciplined sharing in the stealth and alertness imposed on animals in a wild world". His book has large, clear print, attractive illustrations and chapters short enough to fill in whatever time might be left between chasing fish and game and consuming them. The author's friends, relations, and admirers will recognize his touching mixture of enthusiasm and diffidence. (Jo Grimond recalls how, even at the close of his Parliamentary career, Winston Churchill would remind the Clerks of his name; Lord Home has been seen at intimate weekend conferences conscientiously wearing an identifying badge, virtually the only participant to do so.)

Premier-watchers will find a few clues here, as they note the Foreign Secretary setting his watch by the evening flight of the ducks from St James's Park (and selecting "a right and left with my imaginary gun") and the Prime Minister encouraging a mallard duck nesting in some low hypericum just outside the Cabinet Room. Biographers will be intrigued by occasional references to Lord Home's brothers, especially George, whose caterpillars were obligingly sent by his father in a taxi from London to Eton "rather than that they should miss a meal of their particular food", and Henry, who sought to persuade two dozen wild turkeys to roost in trees at The Hirsel, had his bottom peppered and himself wounded a cow (all on separate occasions).

In Jo Grimond's *Memoirs* we come across Henry again, this time at Borley Rectory, on behalf of the BBC, seeking to record the moaning of ghosts and poltergeists. (He failed.) In this entertaining book, indeed, appear all the Douglas-Home family, with a picture of the present Lord Home's saintly father, presiding over a household crowded with "old habitués and the odd man or woman [he] had picked up on his peregrinations round the country", while Collingwood, an ingenious butler, improvises erratic but generous supplies of food and drink. Grimond attracted his host's especial sympathy in this house whose days were devoted to slaughter. "Going shooting again, how do you know Grimond doesn't want to think today?" cries Lord Home, "desperate for some check on his sons' appetites."

That Grimond did do a good deal of thinking is evident from these pages. But much more interesting than his deliberations on political theory are his incidental and often intuitive comments on what sort of lives people prefer and how ill-equipped is authority to manage them. Mind you, the author's criteria remain imprecise and they certainly do not emerge from his casual, kindly anecdotes about a procession of extraordinary relations and dotty friends. These include (for example) Mr Linskill, who had his thumb in plaster because he trod on it going home, Miss Slade, muffled up in a sari and cloak when accompanying Gandhi and thus by far the best-dressed of the party (but nonetheless reproached for her improper costume by the wife of the Headmaster of Eton, who had known Admiral Slade, her father), Colonel Whitley, giving Grimond his own post at UNRRA, packing his bags and leaving, and Grimond's Uncle Foster, "who I now see led a reasonably normal life with his wife, May" (the text does not suggest how it might have been judged otherwise).

Jo Grimond is particularly good at observing what makes children feel comfortable and how they are best entertained. He perceives that they like information and "contrary to modern beliefs often like being instructed". His book is chatty and informative, like the most generous and innocent child, and, just as children do not always pause to settle their punctuation, so his text skips along with a notable absence of commas. It is immense fun, as instruction should be, and not at all patronizing.

None of this avuncular jollity for Sir Harold. *Final Term* is like a dutiful account of the last months at school by a head boy who has passed all his examinations, finds the Fifth Form being uppish and the junior forms ignorant of his past triumphs at football. Even the most dedicated of political scientists (dismissed by Jo Grimond as "racing tipsters") will weary of this solemn chronicle by the tired man portrayed on the jacket. Politics may be a strange profession but by itself it is insufficiently stimulating for the ordinary man and the normal reader. Let us hope that, like Home and Grimond, Sir Harold may now abandon himself to other eccentricities and frivolous pleasures and engage himself on the books he really wants to write. That is, if politicians must write books at all.

In *Religious Controversies of the Jacobean Age: A Survey of Printed Sources* (276pp. Scolar Press. £15. 0 85967 451 7), Peter Milward continues the valuable work he commenced in his *Religious Controversies of the Elizabethan Age* (1977), arranging and grouping over 750 publications of James I's reign according to the particular controversies to which they were contributions, and explaining the relationship of each with other literature.

The proper study of Pope

By G. S. Rousseau

M. R. BROWNELL :
Alexander Pope and the Arts of Georgian England
427pp. Oxford University Press. £16.
0 19 817338 5

This book will not shed new light on Pope's poetry, but it makes the excellent point—at least by implication—that Pope the man is still not understood. In our century Pope has been viewed as a poet apart from his society, as a neurotic figure incessantly warring against it, as an alienated and cloistered figure who lived to practise one art—poetry—on a palimpsest inscribed "art for art's sake". Upon occasions Pope has even been transformed into a proto-Keats: a literary prodigy devoted to the establishment of his own permanence by sedulous application to his muse and perpetual worship in the Temple of Beauty, so that the last two lines of Keats's "Grecian Urn" would seem to sum him up perfectly. Others have known better, for example Allen Tate who wrote these profound lines in *Mr Pope and Other Poems*

What requisitions of a verity
Prompted the wit and rage between
his teeth

One cannot say. . . .

Many have wondered about the "requisitions", and if Pope were alive today and could listen to our hypotheses, he might prove those Victorians right who dubbed him "the wicked Wasp of Twickenham". At least "the rage between his teeth" when hearing about himself as a type of Keats might encourage that view. Pope might prefer to be aligned with Byron: both were the proud inheritors of the pure chromosome of satire, both were obsessed by the thrill of linguistic inflation and deflation, and both were unquestionably more complicated than their biographers have made them out.

We have not of course merely viewed Pope as an aesthetic solitary. We have also watched him in the crowd as one of the mob of English citizens. Sometimes we think we have discovered Pope's identity in that landscape: observing him in the vast circles of literary London, following him through political intrigues and legal entanglements, measuring his variety and degree of "Erasmian Catholicism", studying him as an entrepreneur who makes money and pockets it under less than honest circumstances, and speculating about him as a "literary businessman" who negotiates contracts with printers and booksellers and holds them to his version of the bargain. By tracing Pope's career down all these avenues, we have persuaded ourselves that a whole man has emerged; that the "real Pope" has been retrieved by our penchant for facts and our insistence on telling the truth. At least we think we know the facts about Pope's politics, religion, economics, science, social attitudes, historical views, etc.

Study of the inner man has produced less satisfactory results. As long as one speculates about Pope's activities there is little disagreement or controversy. The extant facts are available in five weighty volumes of correspondence and hundreds, even thousands, of related documents. Yet as soon as we depart from the facts, the case grows slippery, even perilous. "What did Pope believe in his heart?" One wonders about his religious views. Widely acknowledged indications exist of his Jacobite connections. Can he have been an "intellectual" or "sentimental" Jacobite, that is, someone who does not publicly act as a Jacobite but who privately believes in its dogma?

The same dilemma exists regarding Pope's politics and to a greater degree his psychology. No one to my knowledge has dared to ask the big question about Pope's sexuality, and no one since Edith Sitwell wrote in 1930 has dared to write a psychobiography that is even mildly in touch with the facts of his physiology. Sherburn, to be sure, dismissed Miss Sitwell's Life as more "wit"; but this dismissiveness did not solve the riddle of Pope's psychology. It must be remembered that Pope suffered such a severe illness in childhood that the whole course of his life was changed. "This crazy constitution" became his personal maxim; and he could write with complete veracity that he never "enjoyed three days' consecutive health".

In short, this is where Pope studies were in 1968. In 1969 Maynard Mack published *The Garden and the City: Retirement and Politics in the Later Poetry of Pope 1731-1743*. "Retirement" and "politics" were Mack's main themes; yet, as the critics observed, whereas the latter surveyed ground already charted, the former was virgin territory whose settlement would radically alter our concept of Pope. Beginning with an epigraph selected from the writings of Thomas Mann—"Who is a poet? He whose life is symbolic"—Mack studied Pope's "garden life" in three revelatory chapters: "A Poet in His Landscape", exploration of Pope in and about his "villa" at Twickenham; "The Shadowy Cave", new discoveries about Pope's much-celebrated grotto; and "Secretum Iter", the most brilliant chapter, in which Pope's creative imagination in various states of solitude was probed. He not only demonstrated that "Pope's poetry, like the book he was accustomed to call Scripture, begins with a garden and ends with a city", but wrote an elaborate commentary on the literal and symbolic dimensions of that "garden". He explained why nineteenth-century scholars overlooked Pope's activities as a gardener and leader of the landscape movement, and shows why critics with Romantic biases could not accommodate Pope's innovations:

> Pope's interest in landscape was not their interest. His landscape had plenty of room for espaliers and kitchen-gardens, as theirs had not, and no room whatever for Helvellyn or caverns measureless to man — a circumstance that seems to have rendered it unsuitable to Romantic needs and perhaps almost recognizable as "real" landscape. There, clearly enough, lies the crux of the matter.

Having isolated the "crux", Mack amplified the much more important matter of Pope's "symbolic life", studying Pope's interior self in relation to this literal landscapes. He probed to an unprecedented extent the inscription over Pope's grotto "secretum iter et fallentis somita vitae" (a secluded journey along the pathway of an unnoticed life), and distinguished among interpretations Pope may have given the "secretum iter". The line is Horace's (*Epistles* I xviii 103) and refers to the pleasures of tranquillity and solitude. Pope enlarged its Horatian context and read into it applications to his own life and times.

Morris R. Brownell's book substantiates Mack's intuition about Pope's interior and exterior selves. Pope will no longer be consigned to the outer spheres of influential landscape gardeners, nor can his horticultural and architectural triumphs any longer be considered secondary to his literary conquests. All this combines to create a new image of Alexander Pope. And Pope's "swan song" to Swift, composed on New Year's Day in 1736 in a mood of intense worry about Swift's failing health, must now be read less literally than it has in the past: "I am", Pope confesses

> as much a better Gardiner, as I'm a worse Poet, than when you saw me: But gardening is near a-kin to Philosophy, for Tully says *Agricultura proxima sapientiae*. For God's sake, why should not you . . . so quit the place [Ireland]; and live and die with me?

Brownell is not merely concerned with Pope's horticultural interests; as the title of his book suggests, he wants to document Pope's activities in "the Arts of Georgian England". Consequently there are four sections—on painting, landscape gardening, architecture, sculpture, in this order—accompanied by eighty-six black and white illustrations, three appendixes (on the myth of Pope's insensibility to music, a checklist of thirty-seven views of the villa at Twickenham, and a persuasive argument that Blenheim bears more similarities to "Timon's Villa" in the *Epistle to Burlington* than Houghton does), copious footnotes, and an extensive index.

He starts by considering Pope as a "virtuoso" who found himself, from youth, irresistibly lured by the arts. The reader is then conducted on a thorough tour of Pope's activities in the labyrinthine world of early eighteenth-century painting, as amateur painter, sitter and, later, as connoisseur. Brownell has not unearthed new information about Pope in the milieu of painting, but he has compressed a great deal. The second part of this section, entitled "Parallels between Painting and Poetry", is more consequential. Here Brownell treads ground covered by Jean Hagstrum and Lawrence Lipking, yet makes original insights, especially in discussing Pope's notes to the translations of Homer and Lessing's attack on Pope's "Observations on the Shield of Achilles".

His account of Pope's landscape gardening is another matter altogether. It is longer than the other sections combined and comprises half the book; it surveys all aspects of Pope's horticultural activity, not only the poet's susceptibility to "prospects" and "landscapes", but his most rudimentary concept of what a garden is, what constitutes its "picturesque" qualities, and how it must accommodate itself, especially in instances of great country houses (Blenheim, Houghton, Stowe, Prior Park, Stourhead), to "the genius of the place". This is not virgin territory, and Brownell does not pretend that Christopher Hussey, Margaret Jourdain, Edward Malins, Miles Hadfield, and dozens of others have never written, but this is the first synthetic account.

Brownell does not ask us to revise our sense of Pope's theories, but he fills in the picture, as it were, and substantiates a claim often made but not to my knowledge substantiated before: that Pope's influence in gardening was sufficiently large to alter, through maxims and examples, the face of England and eventually of other Western European countries. This idea has most recently been put forward, but again without much substantiation, by Blanche Henrey in the second volume of *British Botanical and Horticultural Literature before 1800*. It was Pope's custom to mutter as prolifically about lettuce in a familiar poem ("Or rather truly, if your Point be Rest,/Lettuce and Cowslip Wine: *Probatum est*"), as to pronounce definitively about the landscape of "great houses". And it is too well known to be laboured here that Pope preferred irregularity and wilderness—as Professor Mack has written in *The Garden and the City*, "the *paysages humanisés* of Rousham or Stourhead or even Stowe". Pope encouraged the "natural genius" of the spot, dwelt upon its location, perspective, shades of colour, and censured the manicured lawns and symmetrical perfections of certain French gardens.

Now that the evidence is assembled it speaks for itself, showing Pope, teaching both through precept and example. Even nineteenth-century critics who took the time to assemble Pope's scene design in the *Pastorals* or the landscapes in his two translations of Homer intuited that these were the "visions" of someone deeply stirred by "physical prospects". But they could not have known the extent to which Pope *practised* his aesthetic of natural scenery, not only at home in his ideally "picturesque garden" at Twickenham but in the gardens of his neighbours: Burlington's place at Chiswick, Charles Talbot's "little Seat" at Isleworth, Marble Hill, Richmond Lodge, and on a grander scale at Cirencester and Prior Park in collaboration with professional landscape architects such as Charles Bridgeman and William Kent.

Pope also found plenty of scope in antitypes of the great house: at Bevis Mount in Southampton, Hagley in Worcestershire, Dawley Park in Middlesex, and The Riskins, Swift's farm in Buckinghamshire. To all these Pope contributed something important. His efforts were not always twofold (precept and practice), but his influence was felt and recorded, and must now be acknowledged. He helped to transform England's country seats into imaginative landscapes by appealing to the heart as well as the head; and turned them into structures as allusive as his own poetry—no mean feat for a near-dwarf who complained about "being jolted unto death" whenever he rode in an ordinary coach, or for a member of three concurrent minorities (Catholic, cripple, poet) whose physical suffering alone might have compelled him to brood about his own future rather than England's. If ever one needed proof of the validity of the concept "creative malady", it is the case of Pope at work in the gardens of England.

Brownell is prudent not to document every detail of Pope's garden activity. He does not tell the whole story, for example, of Pope's pineapple craze. As early as 1734 Pope was growing "ananas" with John Searle, his gardener. In the spring of 1735 Pope wrote to William Fortescue that he was expanding his garden, "making two new ovens and stoves, and a hot-house for ananas, of which I hope you will taste this year". Three years later Pope was still experimenting for cheaper and better ways to raise the fruit. In August 1738 he "borrowed" Henry Scott, Burlington's protegé who was expert in growing pineapples, to consult with him "about a Stove I am building". By 1741 Pope thought he had discovered, with the aid of Scott, the long-sought method and attempted to popularize it among friends. "In a Week or two", he wrote to Ralph Allen, "Mr Scott will make you a Visit, he is going to Set up for himself in the Art of Gardening . . . & particularly has a design which I think a very good one, to make Pineapples cheaper." The "design" was a certain type of stove for the "Pine House" at Prior Park. We may wonder what it was, and what the now obscure Scott's new technology involved. Also, did Allen take Pope's advice to give Scott a chance? The evidence is scant but it can be pieced together.

Brownell's two final sections, on architecture and sculpture, are shorter but not less authoritative. Pope's famous grotto at Twickenham—perhaps the most celebrated in England—was naturally the best example of his architectural genius. But the Shell Temple, in which he captured various optical illusions and designed a "Gothic effect", and his attitudes to the Palladian revival, especially in satiric commentary in his poems, also deserve scrutiny. Brownell spends a great deal of energy demonstrating that architecture was a "humanity" for Pope, "a manifestation of virtue". Pope's contributions to eighteenth-century architecture naturally loom large in this discussion; but the Popean analogy between architectural health and general cultural health is as significant. Brownell discriminates between the polemics of architecture—what we today would call the politics of architecture—and its moral and aesthetic aims, i e, its ultimate humanity. This is the best essay on Pope and architecture I have seen, not because of its exhaustiveness but rather because its gaze is so sturdy and well focused. The student who reads it will never again wonder, for example, why Pope entombed William Benson, the most vocal proponent of the Inigo Jones revival, as his "Dunce of Architecture" in the *Dunciad*.

Sculpture and poetry were considered sister arts in the eighteenth century, the former a "paradigmatic art" because it derived its origin from the poets. As Pope says of their reciprocity in the *Epistle to Addison*, "The verse and sculpture bore an equal part,/And Art reflected images to Art". Beginning here, Brownell demonstrates Pope's view of the equal importance of each of two parts, proving his case by examination of Pope's attachment to funerary monuments. This is, to be sure, an eclectic but not unprofitable way to study "verse and sculpture"; moreover, it is in keeping with Pope's lifelong interest in epitaphs and inscriptions, particularly in association with the monuments of poets and artists. Here Pope could show his admiration of the humanistic principles of Bernini and Roubiliac and insist on cultivation of the "picturesque". "The reader of Pope's satire", Brownell writes, "would scarcely suspect that he had been one of the prime movers of the monuments to British Worthies", and I don't think Brownell overstates the case a bit. On the contrary, modern critics have been tyrannized so much by their notion of Pope as a man who cared about nothing other than poetic craft, that they have overlooked his lapidary accomplishments. Brownell's arguments implicitly align Pope's imagination with "Romantic sensibility" more nearly than has been the case in the past, without imposing on him a false Classic-Romantic antithesis.

That Pope possessed a genuine aesthetic sensibility is not a universally acknowledged idea: the Romantics doubted it (especially those who sided with Coleridge in his quarrel with Wordsworth); the Victorians denied it (the progenitor of an "Age of Prose" cannot have been naturally endowed with distinct aesthetic sensibility); and even the Moderns, particularly those who set up dialectical categories comprehended by the terms Nature and Art, have only been willing to concede Pope's aesthetic sensibility to a point: so long as the degree of that "sensibility" remains a peg below Blake's and Ruskin's, and so long as its consequences does not elevate Pope to the status of the major Renaissance humanists or the great Romantic synthesists, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Blake.

Brownell's researches now silence the sceptics, dead or alive. It is not likely that anyone who cares about taste will write any longer as William Whewell, the noted Master of Trinity College in Cambridge, did in the Regency: "I do *not*, then, make Pope my idol. I should *not* rejoice to see his style restored. I do *not* perceive in him, or learn from him, the love of nature. I do *not* even insist upon him being called a poet." Nor is there doubt any longer about Pope's importance to the arts of his epoch.

But *Alexander Pope and the Arts of Georgian England* opens up an even more important approach that cannot have been explored profitably until Pope's activities as a "virtuoso" in the service of his country were documented. This is Pope's extended "pastoral self", Pope on the "other side" of English paradise; the Pope who wrote to Ralph Allen, "My garden . . . my Life", unable to contain the charged analogy within himself. Now that it is known where Pope went on his rambles and precisely what he contributed to the projects of his contemporaries, the question that has never been adequately put about his relation to England's aristocratic lords and ladies must be asked: why were they swayed by Pope, why did they listen when he lashed out against Vanbrugh and Blenheim, and why did they follow Pope's advice when others more eminent in landscape architecture told them to desist and refrain? If Pope's overarching analogy is indeed between "my garden" and "my life", then his larger garden—the "garden of England"—ought to be symbolically even more significant to him. The missing key is the aristocracy: for a long time Pope's reason for cultivating the friendship of the aristocracy has been thought to rest, *faute de mieux*, on his incorrigible snobbery. That precept must now be challenged.

After all, Pope's poetry, as Mack said, begins with a garden and ends with a city; but it also starts in an "English paradise" in the *Ode on Solitude*, Pope's first original poem, and ends on an English stage as the curtain falls on a night-town—London—of forfeited paradise in the *Dunciad*. "Happy the man", Pope had written in the earlier poem, who discovers "sound sleep by night" and "innocence, which most does please". In the *Dunciad*, "Lo! thy dread Empire, CHAOS! is restor'd" and "Light dies before thy uncreating word". The Miltonic glances are too patent to be laboured. But if Pope is a poet of the garden and the city, he is also the soundest commentator, after Milton, on English paradises, lost and regained, at home and abroad. "Lo! thy dread Empire, CHAOS!" is as English a line as was ever written.

Pope's career followed on the footsteps of public events his memory could not forget nor his imagination obliterate. To be sure, he did not personally witness the Great Fire of 1666, but when he was growing up in London, in the centre of the City in a street bounded by the present Bank and Monument, he observed the most intense building spree in English history, and saw that what had recently been "lost" could be rebuilt, "regained". "The Groves of *Eden*" were "vanished now so long" but were imaginatively recaptured by Pope in *Windsor Forest*; were also being "regained" and made into flesh in England by architects, by bricks and mortar and Taste. For Pope it was as important that England's "sacred Domes" be rebuilt as that "Esher's peaceful groves" once again be "unsequestered", after "A dreadful Series of Intestine Wars".

Besides, Pope himself was born in the year of the Great Revolution—1688—just a few days before the king's own "son", a fact Pope knew well. His symbolic birth laid a burden on him; was elevated in his own mind to the status of a "ruling Passion"—one not even surpassed by the implications of his bodily deformity. The voice in *Windsor Forest* that utters "Oh Fact accurst! What Tears has *Albion* shed", is no less apocalyptically engaged and emotionally obsessed with paradise lost and paradise regained than were Milton and Blake. Ultimately Pope is a poet and visual artist concerned with the transformation of England "in that blest Moment" when she seems to be moving from the nether world of chaos and darkness—wars, plagues, fires, revolution—to the light of solitude in Edenic retirement.

But the progression is not so simple and rebounds in confusing motions: time and again from dark to light and back to dark. Pope moves in his poetry from promises of Edenic redemption to "sequestered Scenes" that are not paradises at all. The pattern of involutions and paradoxical inversions is too complicated to be discussed here. But the career of Pope as English poet, English visionary, and now, thanks to Brownell, as English virtuoso-artist, beckons us to probe Pope more fully. Previously, critics have invoked an axis of Blake, Shelley and Yeats. An equally valid axis is Milton, Pope and Blake, the three angels of Albion and a triumvirate whose "message" has little to do with art for art's sake.



One of Salvator Rosa's very fine Figurine *series, which is reproduced and catalogued in* The Etchings of Salvator Rosa *by Richard W. Wallace (369pp. Princeton University Press. £22.40. 0 691 03935 6). Rosa (1615-1673), a Romantic before his time, was deservedly a major influence on later generations of artists, particularly in England: "copied, imitated and forged with extraordinary frequency", as Wallace says in his long critical introduction to the etchings.*

Literature in brief

JOHN WORTHEN :
D. H. Lawrence and the Idea of the Novel
198pp. Macmillan. £12.
0 333 21706 3

Lawrence's idea of the novel, John Worthen seems to be saying in this hard-working book, is essentially the idea of the sermon. The novelist, dissatisfied with us and our ways, is striving to reach out to us and change us, and would judge his success by the effectiveness with which he sets us thinking and acting rather than by any aesthetic criterion. I think this is true, and that it is the essential paradox of Lawrence's work that writings so often of such superb artistry as his are so single-mindedly proselytizing in their aim. Only whereas a preacher thus minded and thus notably endowed—say, John Donne in his pulpit—has a ready-made creed with which to impress us as he may, Lawrence in his novels is groping for his own credo as he goes along. He is, in fact, often agonizing himself with the difficulty of his search, and when thoroughly baffled or frustrated his gospel, if not positively incoherent to the point of meaninglessness, yet moves into obscurities and complexities which leave the reader—and, still more, a critic of Mr Worthen's strenuous and not quickly satisfied sort—baffled and frustrated, too. The present book, its preface says, is "about the changing way in which Lawrence saw his novels; it is a history of his changing relationship with his audience." Like many good history books it is tough going at times. It is also provocative and thought-compelling in a fashion that Lawrence himself would have liked.

J. I. M. Stewart

JANE CHANCE NITZSCHE :
Tolkien's Art : A Mythology for England
168pp. Macmillan. £8.95.
0 333 26464 9

This is an attractively presented short study based on an excellent idea, namely that of tracing the nature of the relationship between Tolkien's scholarship in Old and Middle English and his creative writing. There are some deft observations: Tolkien in his early *Beowulf* lecture was a Germanic hero defending the poem from the monsters of pedantry, and when professionally obliged to play the scholarly monster himself he tended to keep the heroic, creative side of his temperament in play. But equally the monster could creep in when he was casting himself as the hero. In the preface to his American paperback edition of *The Lord of the Rings* he defends his novel from pirate publishers whose dishonesty and dishonour he compared with that of "Saruman in his decay". But as Miss Nitzsche slyly points out, Tolkien defending his copyright inevitably looks a little like Smaug defending his treasure or Gollum avidly clutching for the Ring of Power.

In these terms, though, Miss Nitzsche is herself a bit of a monster, albeit an efficient and clear-sighted one who makes interesting and (to me) new observations about the shorter fantasies and *The Hobbit*, but confines her discussion of the great central trilogy to thirty pages of curiously austere and joyless analysis. She remarks that the nature of her approach required her to give disproportionately little space to *The Lord of the Rings*, but since that is the work that everyone knows best her study would, surely, have benefited from a less congested treatment of the trilogy than this.

John Batchelor

JAMES GIBSON (Editor) :
Thomas Hardy. The Complete Poems : Variorum Edition
969pp. The Macmillan Press Ltd. £30.
0 333 23973 0

RICHARD H. TAYLOR (Editor) :
The Personal Notebooks of Thomas Hardy
301pp. The Macmillan Press Ltd. £15.
0 333 23302 6

It was Thomas Hardy's wish that volumes of his collected poems should be sold "at a reasonable price so as to be within the reach of poorer readers". That wish has been faithfully observed by Macmillan through the numerous reprints of the 1930 edition of Hardy's *Collected Poems*: it was also taken into account when James Gibson's excellent edition of *The Complete Poems* was published in 1976. In addition to being reasonably priced, *The Complete Poems* offered a reliable text in a manageable and attractive format.

It is now supplemented by a Variorum edition of the same text that will be found indispensible by scholarly students of Hardy's poetry, though not perhaps by many other readers: unfortunately this variorum is so cumbersome and expensive that it will be used rather than read, and then only at a library desk. Its usefulness is further restricted in ways that seem characteristic of Hardy. Few early drafts of Hardy's poems survive in manuscript, though Hardy was careful to preserve fair copies of the poems he published in volume form, and this means that the variants and errors noted by Professor Gibson have usually been traced at subsequent stages of composition, revision, or publication. This has obviously not made Professor Gibson's editorial labours any lighter: he has pursued and noted every possible correction and alteration made by Hardy, but in most cases what we have demonstrated to us in the variorum is how a poem received its final form, not how it came into being.

The Personal Notebooks of Thomas Hardy has similar strengths [illegible] and limitations. Richard Taylor reproduces four of Hardy's notebooks which are owned by the Dorset County Museum. Two of these consist mainly of brief diary entries of people met, books read, and ideas for novels and stories; the third contains slight factual notes and observations on the history of painting; and the fourth is made up of notes kept by Hardy when he was preparing to write *The Trumpet-Major*. Much of this information is of little interest by itself, but Dr Taylor's extensive annotation gives the necessary biographical context. In addition to the notebooks, Dr Taylor has usefully reprinted the passages omitted from *The Life of Thomas Hardy* and arranged these so that they can be read together with the standard published volume: the discussion he offers of the circumstances surrounding the composition of the *Life* is valuable for both its specialist knowledge and its common-sense.

Peter Keating

V. S. PRITCHETT :
The Myth Makers.
190pp. Chatto and Windus. £5.95.
0 7011 2434 2

This collection of nineteen pieces variously occasioned will confirm many in the view that V. S. Pritchett is the most effective and distinguished of living English critics. Who else could cover so wide a field as is here traversed with such authority and confidence and, above all, unflagging gusto? He is tolerant (telling us, for example, that it is delightful to see a scholar going too far), sparing of comprehensive censure, yet swiftly precise in determining the idiosyncrasies and limitations of the major novelists with whom he is concerned.

Perhaps because he is himself a creative writer, he can pack much into a metaphor or a brief escape of wit. Genet, one essay begins, is a writer who has the courage of his convictions. Zola, we are told, "like some powerful locomotive, eats up facts and lives as if they were so much coal, choking us with enormous clouds of smoke which were both dream and nightmare". Strindberg "is the perpetual autobiographer who has at least three albatrosses—his three wives—hanging from his neck, and it is not long before he is telling us that the birds shot *him*". The melancholy, passive, defeated Chekhov supposed to be evidenced in his plays vanishes when we tackle his thousands of vivid letters with their humour "sharp as horse-radish".

Two outstanding essays are those on Stendhal and Dostoevsky respectively. The biographer of Stendhal, Sir Victor says, is in competition with a perpetual autobiography in which the writer sees himself as a conspiracy, as performing an exercise in endless self-invention. The process is at its most subtle in the depicting of youth. "No one has so defined and botanized the fervour, uncertainty, conceit, timidity and single-mindedness of young men, their dash, their shames, their calculation for tactics and gesture." In his early writings Stendhal failed to create an impenetrable new self as the superior man of sensibility, but became a master of comedy "in which scornful epigram and abrupt observations go off like rifle shots and leave the dry smell of gunpowder". (The Portuguese Eça de Queiroz, we learn in another essay, is "a moistened Stendhal".) In Dostoevsky there is emphasis upon "his *biographical* gift":

> Life stories of endless complexity hang shamelessly out of the mouths of his characters, like dogs' tongues, as they run by; the awful gregariousness of his people appears simultaneously with the claustrophobia and the manias of their solitude.

And Dostoevsky's sense of time is a sense of bursting, continuous instants. "A whole life, past and present, breaks open this minute and will go on bursting in every minute that follows". And all this we are made to *see*:

> It is no news that Dostoevsky's novels are dramas of conscience and belief; but they are great novels because he is able to translate this into specific acts and scenes of believing, and because he creates imbroglios of extraordinary physical vividness. He is a sculptor of molten figures.

J.I.M.S.

EDGELL RICKWORD :
Literature in Society : Essays & Opinions II 1931-1978
Edited by Alan Young
332pp. Carcanet New Press. £6.90.
Press. £6.90
0 85635 254 3

Not least among Michael Schmidt's services to contemporary literature is the printing, for the first time, of the essays and reviews of Edgell Rickword. The first volume contained Rickword's contributions to the *Calendar of Modern Letters*, and showed him as a "literary radical" deeply influenced by T. S. Eliot. As we pick him up in *Literature in Society* the Eliotian Rickword begins to give way, after a lucid review of Eliot's *Selected Essays*, to a much more radical stance. In his many contributions to the *Left Review*, which he edited, and to other periodicals, Rickword showed himself to have been the most attractive and most intelligent Marxist critic of the interwar years. He was not at all a serious theoretician like Caudwell, but he assimilated a great deal of what was useful in Marxism and wrote, undogmatically, precisely the kind of criticism which should have nourished further work on the left. It is astonishing that his achievement has not, to this day, been fully acknowledged.

Marxism for Rickword was closely wound up with the necessity for political engagement. He conducts many a trench raid against the ivory tower mentality, against the stance of artist as by-stander, *flâneur*, aesthete. The alternative is traced through a series of papers on Milton, Swift, Cobbett, Thelwall, Wordsworth, Hazlitt and William Hone: the writer as "revolutionary intellectual". The re-discovery of the radical tradition was a distinctive part of Popular Front culture in the late 1930s (articles in the *Daily Worker* on the Chartists), in which Rickword was very much at home. He wrote with considerable insight on Spender and Auden, pointing out that neither poet really understood what the building of socialism would entail. Rickword tried to show how class, and the consequent isolation of the English liberal, pacifist intellectuals from the labour movement, brought Auden's generation to an impasse. At the time the way out scarcely seemed problematic. A whole-hearted commitment to the struggle against capitalism and fascism was the only way, but one gets the impression that for Rickword this kind of commitment was neither a magical talisman nor panacea. It was merely the precondition, the first step, towards the reintegration of intellectuals into society.

Even the most heroically committed figures, such as Malraux, were still faced with the problems of writing good books. In a fascinating essay in *New Writing* in 1938, Rickword maintained a difficult balance between an acute and sometimes hostile discrimination and a generalized feeling that Malraux was a good thing.

Rickword's practice as a critic was summed up in a statement from 1941: "The concrete experience, which must be the writer's starting point, does not exist in isolation from the complex of social relationships". The insistence upon the specific experience, as opposed to the heady ideological cocktail served up by History and the Class Struggle, set Rickword apart in the 1930s, and may help to explain why he is something of a hero, a very unassuming sort of hero, on the left today.

Eric Homberger

The first volume of the new annual *Review* (University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville. $20), was published in 1979. It aims (and in its 348 pages has largely succeeded) to provide a series of lengthy review-essays on scholarly work on English and American language and literature. Attractively produced, and carefully edited by James O. Hoge and James L. W. West (who have already explained their editorial policy in the magazine *Scholarly Publishing*), the enterprisingly commissioned essays cover a wide range. Bibliography and textual studies receive prominent attention and scholarship tends to be rather better covered than criticism. But the mixture will doubtless change from year to year, and this stimulating new venture must be warmly welcomed.

Geoffrey Naylor

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Applications are invited from Chartered Librarians for the following posts :—

(Grade : Librarian III)

- Isaac Newton School, Wornington Road, W.10
- Kennington School, Cormont Road, SE5 9RF
- Paddington College, Saltram Crescent, W9 3HW

The person appointed will be the site librarian at Saltram Cresce:—

- St. Theresa's R.C. School, Belmont Hill, SE13 5DZ
- Silverthorne School, Southampton Way, S.E.5

This is a part-time post (initially 30 hours per week, term-time only).

- Tower Hamlets School, Richard Street, Commercial Road, E1 2JP.

Application forms for all posts and further details from the Education Officer, ED/Estab. 7B, Room 367, The County Hall, London SE1 7PB.
Please enclose a stamped addressed foolscap envelope for reply.
Completed application forms to be returned not later than Friday, 1st February, 1980.

NT NATIONAL THEATRE

has a vacancy for a

RIGHTS MANAGER

The work involves the negotiation of licenses of stage and subsidiary rights in literary and dramatic material used by the Theatre and/or other media, and of collective agreements with writers' unions.
The successful candidate must have knowledge of current practice in the fields of contracts, copyright and defamation and be capable of advising the Theatre's management on the law concerning them. Salary negotiable. Four weeks' holiday. Subsidised canteen.

Please write or telephone for an application form to: David Roberts, Head of Establishments, National Theatre, South Bank, London, SE1 9PX. Tel.: (01) 928 2033 ex.: 376.

DIVISIONAL LIBRARIAN
NORTH EAST ESSEX
PO2(a) £7,704-£8,520 ref. 115/79

Applications are invited from suitably qualified Librarians for the post of Divisional Librarian, North East Essex. There are five Divisions, the North East Division is centred on Colchester, where a new Library is to be opened in April and consists of two Area Teams, one based at Colchester and the other at Clacton.
The successful candidate will be responsible for the general direction of the Senior Management Team.
Application forms and job description can be obtained from Personnel Department, County Library Headquarters, Goldlay Gardens, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 0EW, and completed application forms should be returned to Mr. Barry Langton, County Librarian, at that address by 11th February, 1980.

ESSEX County Council

UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES—JAMAICA

Applications are invited for the following posts :—

PROFESSOR OF LIBRARY STUDIES

To teach at first degree and postgraduate diploma levels. Preference for applicants with at least one of the following specialisations : bibliography and reference work ; non-book librarianship ; information science ; information resources in Science and Technology. Research orientation and interest in postgraduate work added advantages.

LIBRARIAN II/LIBRARIAN III, LIBRARY

Applicants must be graduates with appropriate professional qualifications or Fellows of the Library Association (or the equivalent), preferably the former. Appointee should be familiar with acquisitions work. Familiarity with the Library of Congress classification, the International Standard Bibliographic Description of Books and Pamphlets languages also desirable. Level of appointment dependent on experience.

Salary Scales : Professor : 1979/80—J$20,770-25,714 p.a., 1980/81—J$22,848-28,285 p.a. ; Librarian II : 1979/80—J$15,480-19,530 p.a., 1980/81—J$17,748-21,717 p.a. ; Librarian III : 1979/80—J$12,990-16,380, 1980/81—J$13,980-20,049 p.a. ; Assistant Lecturer : 1979/80—J$10,308-11,688 p.a., 1980/81—J$13,308-14,088 p.a. (£1 Sterling equals J$3.02). Family passages ; baggage allowance ; F.S.U. study and travel grant ; unfurnished accommodation or housing allowance.

Detailed applications (two copies) with curriculum vitae and naming three referees should be sent as soon as possible to the Registrar, University of the West Indies, Mona, Kingston 7, Jamaica. Applicants resident in the U.K. should also send one copy to the Registrar, Senate and Council, 36/51 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 0DT.

LIBRARIAN
INFORMATION OFFICER

Wanted by leading London Advertising Agency. Please ring 01-839-3422 Ext 294 for details.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE

Outreach worker

£6,108-£6,447 p.a. inc.

If you could 'sell' the services of the Libraries Division by giving lectures, mounting exhibitions, flonts and displays you may be the person we are looking for. We require a person to promote two-way flow of information to ensure that Hackney Libraries and Arts Services are utilised to the maximum.
Applicants should have experience in cultural activities with an arts and/or libraries background, ideally experienced in both fields.
With the opportunity to commence in a new post and join a thriving Division, there is the benefit of additional leave entitlement which goes with working for Hackney, and loans for annual season tickets are available after one year's service.
Application forms from Director of Personnel and Secretarint, Town Hall, Mare Street, E.8, tel. 986 9278 (24-hour ansaphone service), quoting reference FE450/TLS.
Closing date: February 1.
An Equal Opportunity Employer

LONDON BOROUGH OF HACKNEY—THE CITY OF OPPORTUNITY